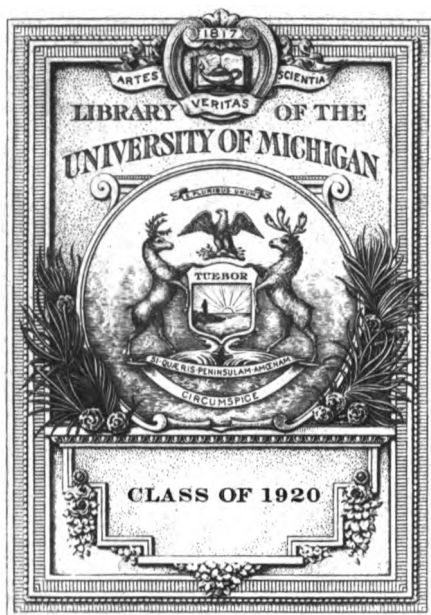

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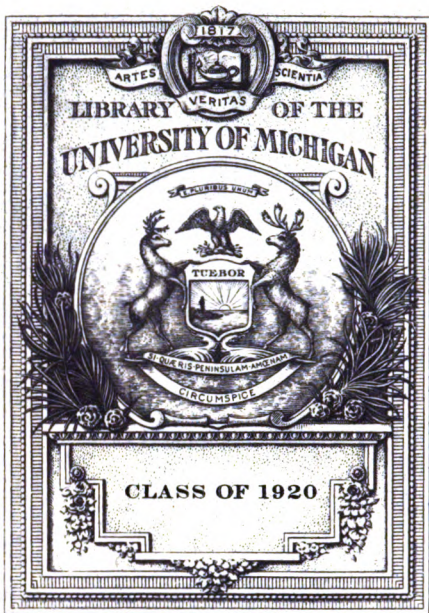
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Officer*

by
LIEUT. A. BAUERMEISTER
(“*Āgricola*”)

Translated and introduced
by
HECTOR C. BYWATER
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AUTHOR'S PREFACE

THIS work is compiled from notes which I made when serving as Intelligence Officer, detailed for special service, on the staff of German G.H.Q. in the Great War. It stands in purposeful contrast to the overwhelming majority of the "spy" literature which has appeared up to now and which, shameful though the fact may be, consists largely of imaginative romance and pure fable. To cite but one example: the legendary "Mademoiselle Docteur" never existed, and at no time was that mythical product of a fantastic brain found behind the enemy's lines. The reminiscences I have set down here describe the most interesting cases of espionage which occurred on the Eastern (Russian) front, and the heroic conduct of those indomitable men and women of the German Intelligence Service who fought against the enemy's espionage system. Almost without exception these warriors met an obscure but terrible end on the gallows.

The life of an Intelligence Officer hung always by a silken thread. Courage, nay, reckless daring, allied with a shrewd and logical brain—these alone could bring him success.

After the Russian revolution in March, 1917, the activities of the German Intelligence Service

PREFACE

(espionage and counter-espionage) found a much wider scope. Its task was then to make clear to the Russian people that they were being sent to death merely to further the aims of French and British chauvinists.

This mission could be carried out with success only *behind* the Russian lines. Already the Tsarist Government had sentenced me, in connection with the trial of Colonel Myasoydov, to death by the rope, and when the Kerensky Administration took office an order was issued that I was to be shot dead wherever I might be found. This notwithstanding, I crossed the Russian trenches some thirty times and even penetrated to the inner circles of the Russian staff. Proof of this statement will be found in the archives of the German G.H.Q.

I dedicate this book to my anonymous comrades who fell in "the battle fought in the dark."

AGRICOLA

(Lieut. Bauermeister)

Intelligence Officer for special service on the
Staff of G.H.Q.

INTRODUCTION

THIS book is a contribution of some importance to the literature on the Great War. Unlike many previous works dealing with secret service, it is based on the personal experiences of one who held a responsible position in that department. All through the war Lieutenant Bauermeister served in the Intelligence Division of the German General Staff. His credentials are beyond dispute ; and if certain episodes in the book appear to border on melodrama, they are balanced by others in which the grim yet almost prosaic routine work of an Intelligence officer is set down without gloss or embroidery.

This is not to suggest that romance and drama, or even melodrama, are alien to secret service activities, which in their very nature must often come into provocative contact with the strongest emotions of the human soul. Love, hate, fear, revenge, greed : each and all of these passions play their part in such work. More than one Intelligence Officer on the Allied side could recount from his own experience incidents no less thrilling nor less dramatic than any that befell Lieutenant Bauermeister.

From the historical point of view his book is, perhaps, most valuable as evidence of the devastating

INTRODUCTION

effects of German propaganda on the Russian army. The Allies of 1914-18, and Great Britain in particular, have been severely castigated by German writers for their successful efforts to undermine the *moral* of the German army and nation by disseminating defeatist literature behind the German front. Now, however, we have conclusive testimony that Germany herself employed this weapon against Russia on the largest and most triumphant scale. While the disclosure will be no news to the student of war, it may conceivably help to discredit the foolish legend, which still persists in Germany, that defeatist propaganda was a diabolical method of warfare invented and monopolised by the Allies.

The case of the Russian officer, Colonel Myasoydov, whose trial and execution are vividly described in the opening chapter, is familiar to all who have explored the antecedents of the Russian Revolution. Lieutenant Bauermeister has chivalrously sought to vindicate the reputation of this unfortunate man, and his assurance, fortified as it is by that of Colonel Nicolai—one of the senior German Intelligence Officers on the Eastern front—that Myasoydov “had never worked for us,” must be given due weight. But in every Intelligence system there are wheels within wheels, and it is exceedingly rare for the identity of all the agents to be known to any save the head or deputy head of the service. In any case, there is no doubt that Colonel Myasoydov had made himself an object of the gravest suspicion.

INTRODUCTION

Sir Bernard Pares writes in his *History of Russia* :—

“ The shortage of ammunition had long since become evident, but the War Minister, Sukhomlinov, refused to be disturbed out of his apathy and even declined offers of help from private factories. An officer in the Intelligence Service, Colonel Myasoydov, detected in regular espionage before the war, but saved from disgrace by personal guarantee from Sukhomlinov, had in the operations of the winter battle in Mazovia sent systematic information by aeroplane to the Germans, which had largely contributed to the Russian defeat. Myasoydov's new treachery was discovered, and in spite of Sukhomlinov and even of Court connections he was hanged as a spy.”

Mr. Robert Wilton, in his *Russia's Agony*, gives a detailed account of Myasoydov's alleged espionage work on behalf of Germany before the war, and further references to the case, all mentioning the Colonel's pre-war treachery as a matter of public knowledge, will be found in other Russian histories. That an officer with this sinister record should have been given a high appointment in the Intelligence service on the outbreak of war sheds a curious side-light on Russian military conditions at that period.

In a later chapter Lieutenant Bauermeister refers to a document, apparently counterfeit, which fell into the hands of the United States Government in 1917. It purported to be an agreement between Lenin, Trotsky and Joffe on the one hand, and Lieutenant Bauermeister on the other, to organise a

INTRODUCTION

campaign of sabotage against American interests in Russia, and was alleged to have been signed at Kronstadt. This, it may be, is the paper quoted in full in Mavor's *Russian Revolution* (p. 163). In it Lieutenant Bauermeister is referred to as "Major Bauermeister, to be known as 'Bear.'" The document, however, bears only the signatures of "O. Rausch, chief of the Russian branch of the German General Staff," and "N. Wolff, Adjutant." Forged documents which at first glance seemed to be of great diplomatic significance were plentiful enough in the underground warfare of 1914-18, and in this particular instance the author's disclaimer of his "secret rendezvous" at Kronstadt with the architects of Bolshevism should satisfy all reasonable minds.

In his concluding chapter he paints a hideous picture of life in Moscow when the Red Terror was at its height, immediately after the attempted assassination of Lenin. The nocturnal scene in the Chekist club, with the bestial executioner, Varga, gloating over his vile work and displaying the jewels he had torn from his victims that day, leaves little to the imagination. It is, however, somewhat incongruous to find the author deploring and condemning in strong language the atrocious conduct of the Bolsheviks. On his own admission he had been largely instrumental in delivering Russia over to these people, and it is a matter of historical record that the German Government smuggled the Bolshevik chiefs into Russian territory by means of the

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famous sealed train. Having deliberately inoculated one's victim with the germs of a frightful disease, it seems rather, shall I say, inconsistent to be shocked by his sufferings.

It is permissible to assume that Lieutenant Bauermeister's main purpose in writing this book was to demonstrate the remarkable efficiency of the German military secret service during the war. To a certain extent he has succeeded, but in so doing he has unwittingly minimised his country's military achievements on the Eastern front. If, as he implies, the German Staff was at all times not only informed about Russian troop dispositions down to the minutest detail, but invariably had previous intelligence of impending Russian moves and counter-moves—such as the Brussiloff offensive and Kerensky's desperate stroke—it would seem to follow logically that no very high degree of generalship was required to frustrate the enemy's plans.

Perhaps the fairest verdict on these Eastern operations is that the military genius of the Hindenburg-Ludendorff partnership, powerfully aided by an elaborate network of espionage, enabled the Central Powers at first to maintain themselves, and then to advance victoriously, on a front of enormous width against an enemy superior in numbers, but indifferently led and pitiably starved of munitions and equipment. Lieutenant Bauermeister would, I suspect, be the first to admit that he owed much of his success in Intelligence work to the peculiarly favourable conditions prevailing on the Eastern

INTRODUCTION

front, and still more to the proverbial laxity of the Russians.

Few will question his prediction that Intelligence "agents" will be found to be as indispensable in the wars of the future as they were in those of the past. Distinct from its human interest, his book is of value as a revelation of what a well-conducted Intelligence system can accomplish in co-operation with the military arm.

The author's comments on Russian generalship and Russian integrity may strike many readers as ungenerous, but it will surprise no one who knows the traditional Prussian attitude to the whole Slav race. He will command more general approval by his ardent tribute to Field-Marshal von Hindenburg, that great man who remained at his post of duty in the hour of supreme trial, and, by his example, as the author truly says, saved Germany from a disaster immeasurably worse than the "pink" revolution of November, 1918.

I would like to add that Lieutenant Bauermeister has written his book in good, straightforward German, without attempting to imitate the affected staccato sentences which, in my opinion, disfigure so much of Germany's current literature. As the translator, I have had special reason to be grateful to the author for his lucid and unpretentious style.

HECTOR C. BYWATER.

LONDON,
October, 1933.

SPIES BREAK THROUGH

CHAPTER ONE

CONDEMNED TO BE HANGED : THE CASE OF THE RUSSIAN COLONEL

INVOLUNTARILY I started—I read my own name in the paper. I was really staggered to see a whole page of the *Novoe Vremya* bearing in enormous type the caption :

“ Who is Bauermeister ? ”

Current events of supreme importance in the various theatres of war were given a much more modest display.

“ As a matter of fact I ought to be proud of such an advertisement if it were not all nonsense,” I said to myself. Sitting in my dreary quarters, I laughed heartily over the wild stories of brigandage told about me by this, the leading and most serious daily newspaper of Russia, for such it claimed to be. According to this authority, even as a young man I had received from the German General Staff a huge salary for my espionage work in St. Petersburg, where I had led the life of a Grand Duke. The inevitable mistresses, expensive horses, and

SPIES BREAK THROUGH

sumptuous wine parties were all credited to me by the paper.

I read about the court-martial proceedings against the Russian Intelligence Officer, Colonel Myasoydov, and learned that in the course of this trial I had been sentenced, *in absentia*, to be hanged. As long as the German trenches separated me from these bloodthirsty gentlemen in Russia I might accept the death sentence calmly enough. On this day I jotted down the following entry in my diary :

"I took the *Novoe Vremya* to Staff quarters and showed the paper to the senior staff officer, Major Hoffmann (who later came into prominence in the Brest-Litovsk peace negotiations). He laughed merrily at the death sentence on me and said that I ought to toast the halter that could not reach me. But when we came to speak of the court-martial itself he grew serious, calling the affair a mean and cowardly judicial murder."

Shortly afterwards I heard full details of this detestable affair from an eye-witness of the trial. On February 18, 1915, Colonel Myasoydov, Intelligence Officer of the Russian 10th Army, was arrested and charged with having engaged in espionage on my behalf. As he had never had anything to do with me he took the matter quietly, merely declaring that a mistake must have been made. He had, of course, no idea that he was to be sacrificed as a scapegoat for the blunders of the Russian high command. Exactly a month later, on

CONDEMNED TO BE HANGED

March 18, this framed-up "spy trial" took place in Warsaw.

The scene was a cold, ill-lighted hall in Warsaw citadel. Colonel Myasoydov, deathly pale and staring straight at the prosecutor, sat in front of the judges' table. The only witness for the prosecution, a Lieut. Kulakovski, was not present in court. The proceedings were simply a matter of form, sentence of death having already been decided upon. No one present doubted that.

It was the Grand Duke Nicholas Nikolaievitch who had decreed death. The blame for his utter failure as Commander-in-Chief was to be placed on the shoulders of Myasoydov, the alleged "German spy."

After a brief consultation the court rose. Before his chair the Colonel stood rigidly at attention; behind him, an officer with several gendarmes. Over the unheated, dimly lighted hall hovered the angel of death. The president spoke in the flat tones of one who is repeating a lesson. Only at the end did he raise his voice.

"The charges have been fully proved. . . . Expulsion from the army . . . death by hanging . . . no appeal against this judgment to be permitted." The Colonel heard these words as if in a dream.

"I am innocent!" he suddenly cried in a loud voice, which echoed strangely through the case-mates.

The court shrugged.

SPIES BREAK THROUGH

"Permit me to communicate by telegraph with his Majesty the Emperor," pleaded the unfortunate man. "No!" "Well, let me at least take farewell of my aged mother." This, too, was refused by the president of the court.

At that the Colonel collapsed and the gendarmes had to support him. Half-senseless, the doomed man was led from the hall. None had any sympathy for the "spy." Even as he was being led away one of the officers called, in a voice loud enough to be heard by the prisoner: "Sergeant Major, is the death shirt ready?"

Conscious of his innocence, Myasoydov did not propose to hang on the gallows like a common felon. He attempted to sever an artery in his pulse with the glass of his pince-nez, but was prevented by his vigilant guards. Like a caged tiger he paced up and down his narrow cell. He knew that he had only a few hours to live; he who clung to life and had enjoyed it in fullest measure. Perhaps he may still have hoped. But why? Sentence of death had been passed and its execution was necessary for the prestige of the Commander-in-Chief. Hour after hour went by.

Myasoydov knocked on the door of his cell. A soldier entered. "I want paper and a pencil to write to my mother." This request was granted by the officer in charge.

The oil lamp flickered. A cold March wind rattled the barred window of the death cell. The Colonel, whose pince-nez had been removed lest he

CONDEMNED TO BE HANGED

should again attempt suicide, bent low over the paper and wrote with a trembling hand :

“ My beloved Mother,

“ The new day is slowly dawning, the last day of my life. Grey and heavy clouds are lowering in the sky and the blast rattles the small window of my cell. The oil lamp flickers as though to say, ‘ I shall soon be extinguished, as soon as your life.’ Perhaps even in an hour’s time I shall be no more. Amidst the howling of the wind I hear voices in the courtyard. It is certainly the hangman and his assistants. In the face of death I swear to you, my beloved Mother, that I die innocent, that the accusations against me are untrue and sheer inventions. I begged the court to allow me to say good-bye to you, but even that they refused. Think kindly of me. I have not deserved this shameful end and I go before the Almighty with a clear conscience. In all true love I embrace you for the last time.— Your unfortunate son.”

With a shaking hand the Colonel gave this note to the gendarmerie officer, Captain Arseniev. “ Promise me that this letter will be sent to my Mother ! ”

“ I will hand it over to the court to be forwarded to your Mother. That I promise you,” answered the Captain. Colonel Myasoydov then broke into loud sobs.

As I heard later on good authority, this letter

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never reached the unhappy mother. She was meant to believe that her son died a traitor. Subsequently a copy of the letter fell into the hands of the Bolsheviks.

Head resting on his hands, Myasoydov sat on the filthy bench in his cell. Outside in the prison yard the dawn broke slowly. Overcome with despair, the doomed man let his head sink to the table.

Roused by heavy footsteps in the corridor he sprang to his feet. "You shall only take me by force!" he cried, in shrill tones. But preparations had been made for this final resistance. Six soldiers threw themselves upon the Colonel, who was a giant in build, more than a head taller than any of them. Yet in that confined space it was a hopeless struggle. They bound him and then hustled him through the long corridor into the courtyard. His cries were echoed back from the walls of the casemates.

"What do you want of me, you dogs? Must I go to the scaffold for your crimes and your inefficiency? Let me go, you godless murderers!"

But like a cat the executioner, Smirnoff, sprang upon him from behind and drew the death shirt over his head. Then the noose was adjusted. Myasoydov kicked out frenziedly.

The hangman and his men now pulled on the rope. The Colonel was suspended in air, but even now his powerful body was bent like a bow. The death throes were terrible to witness. Even the president of the court-martial turned away.



**COLONEL MYASOYDOV, RUSSIAN INTELLIGENCE OFFICER, EXECUTED
BY HIS OWN PEOPLE FOR ALLEGED ESPIONAGE**

CONDEMNED TO BE HANGED

"Frightful," muttered one of the gendarmerie officers to his neighbour. "Let's hope he was really guilty. Otherwise it would be too awful."

When fifteen minutes had passed the hangman, Smirnoff, lowered the corpse to the ground. An assistant drew off the death shirt. The massive form of the Colonel lay upon a grating, his features horribly contorted. He was buried without ceremony, like a dog. A telegram was sent to the Grand Duke Nicholas at headquarters: "The 'German spy,' Myasoydov, has been executed according to orders."

This judicial murder of Colonel Myasoydov was in every sense of the word a despicable crime, the more so in that the victim, having perished shamefully on the gallows, was never afterwards rehabilitated.

Moreover, the method of execution was so revolting that even men with iron nerves could not bear to look upon it. Colonel Nicolai, at that time my chief, writes in his memoirs, *Secret Powers*, that "Myasoydov had never worked for us and he was executed an innocent man." As one who was alleged to be implicated in this espionage affair, I can only confirm in full the assurance of my former chief. Never in my life did I speak a single word to Colonel Myasoydov, nor did I ever approach him through a third party.

Colonel Myasoydov certainly knew much less about the distribution of Russian troops on our Eastern front than I did, for I had the advantage

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of seeing all the deciphered wireless messages that concerned this matter. They did not cost us a farthing and were absolutely reliable. Had Myasoydov been in our service we should have had to pay him a lot of money without having any guarantee as to the accuracy of his reports. This explanation ought to satisfy every rationally minded person.

CHAPTER TWO

THE BATTLE OF LODZ AND THE ALTERED CODE

IN his extremely interesting and informative book, *The War of Lost Opportunities*, General Hoffmann, at first a senior officer on the General Staff and, later, chief of staff to the Commander-in-Chief on the Eastern front, refers to Professor D. and myself as geniuses in the deciphering of wireless intercepts.

Certainly the work was none too easy. It demanded keen and logical thinking, besides a thorough knowledge of the Russian language and Russian military conditions. The Russians changed their code every month. As a rule, we were able to decipher it in three or four hours ; only once did the task occupy over ten hours. That was during the Battle of Lodz. While the battle was in full swing a change over to a new code was suddenly ordered. And this new code was the most difficult we had yet encountered. For five solid hours we laboured without deciphering a single syllable.

Then, as generally happens, chance came to our aid ; we were able to worry out the beginning. And now suddenly we were making progress, though not quickly enough for our liking. I called up Major Hoffmann and told him of our success. He was

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delighted. The decoded radio messages were wanted urgently, but we still had far too few letters and syllables to make them fully legible.

Two hours later Major Hoffmann called me up. I was to come at once to Posen—where the staff of the Commander-in-Chief, Eastern front, was quartered in the castle—by car, at full speed, bringing with me all the material which had been decoded up to them. I was working in the staff office of the 8th Army at Insterburg, and bitterly cold was that December. Moreover, as I have said, only the beginning of the messages had been deciphered and little could be made out of this. I therefore ordered a closed car so that I could continue my work during the journey.

While I wrote with a board across my knees we made the trip from Insterburg to Posen at racing speed. The road was by no means a first-class one, and sometimes it happened that the board which served me as table flew into the air and the papers lay in confusion on the floor—pencils, paper, the board, and the numerous radio “flimsies” in which I was painstakingly inserting syllables. And added to all this was the cold. So stiff were my fingers that I hardly felt the pencil. But I did not, I dared not, give up. Meanwhile I had deciphered almost half the new code and was already able, by using certain combinations, to make further progress.

At 10 p.m. we drew up before the castle in Posen. My fingers, not to mention my feet, were so numb that the chauffeur had to help me pack up the

THE BATTLE OF LODZ AND THE ALTERED CODE

papers, etc. I reported myself to Major Hoffmann. When I told him that I had now discovered so many letters and syllables as to make it possible to read, in broad outline, all the radio messages, he cordially grasped my frozen fingers with both hands. He at once pressed upon me the latest batch of Russian intercepts that lay upon the table—and with them a stiff glass of brandy, “to thaw out your fingers,” he chuckled.

But now, suddenly and irresistibly, weariness overcame me. The long journey in freezing cold, added to the uninterrupted mental strain of ten hours, was taking its toll. But I set my teeth. It had to be done, it must be done. Inside an hour I had decoded the last important radio intercept. They confirmed in all respects the wisdom of the dispositions which General von Hindenburg had made to encircle the Russians. It was another masterstroke, like the Battle of Tannenberg. Among the Russians appalling confusion prevailed, and by way of contrast there was the iron calm and the superiority of Hindenburg, who played with the Russians as a cat with a mouse.

The Russians stood on the brink of another crushing defeat; a defeat of equal magnitude to that of Tannenberg. It would be a catastrophe in the full sense of the word. In order to be taken prisoner the Russian shirkers fired on their own troops. In the zone of our cavalry corps (von Richthofen's) whole combat units of Russians crossed over to us and fought side by side with us.

SPIES BREAK THROUGH

The Russian corps commander had completely lost control of his front. Russian artillery fired on their own troops, who broke and fled in panic.

In one of the wireless messages I had just deciphered the general in command of the Russian 11th Army Corps, General Scheidemann, begged his G.H.Q. for information.

"Please acquaint me at once by radio which corps is stationed north of my troops and which south. Situation extremely critical. Have lost all supervision. Inform me as to general situation.—Scheidemann."

Major Hoffmann laughed out loud when I read him the message. As he had a good command of the Russian tongue I did not have to translate.

"Shall we send him a radio, with the compliments of our Commander-in-Chief, Eastern front, telling him where the Russian troops are?" he said good-humouredly. "Even the Russian G.H.Q. will hardly be able to answer his question." I had to join in the laughter.

But whilst the deciphering of the Russian radiograms was unquestionably of the utmost value to us, I am bound to say, as a professional critic, that it was not this factor, but solely the military genius of Hindenburg, that decided the issue of the battle. Of this genius the Battle of Lodz, one of the greatest and most momentous actions in the East, furnished a typical example. Even before the code was deciphered the battle had been won. The same remark is true also of Tannenberg and of the break-

THE BATTLE OF LODZ AND THE ALTERED CODE

through at Gorlice by Mackensen's army under the leadership of Hindenburg, who during the summer of 1915 rolled up the entire Russian front from the Baltic to the Carpathians.

This, however, does not alter the fact that the radiograms, in conjunction with the reports of our secret agents, played a great part in circumventing Russian preparations for attack. As for the radio messages, they naturally reached us much sooner ; moreover, they were thoroughly reliable, which was not always the case with espionage reports.

But for distant reconnaissance—that is, the identification of new formations far behind the front—we had to forego the aid of enemy wireless. Their radio stations began to work only when troops were already marching by stages to the front, and it was then too late.

Even the aviators could not help us here. True, they were able to report that certain villages were crowded with troops, but whether these were old or new units they could not tell. Needless to say, they were unable to read the numerals on the men's shoulder-straps—which was the most important thing of all. Only the agent—or, in popular parlance, the “spy”—was in a position to report the formation of new army corps and new armies far behind the lines. Consequently, this source of information remained, in spite of radiograms and aviation reports, the most important and least fallible of all. So it will be in the future. No belligerent nation will be able to dispense with such

SPIES BREAK THROUGH

agents. It is true, however, that we sometimes heard by accident of important events in the enemy hinterland—for example, the outbreak of the Russian revolution in March, 1917. The general commanding at Helsingfors wired to St. Petersburg for instructions as to how he was to behave in face of the new developments. We knew, therefore, what had happened.

CHAPTER THREE

WOMEN SPIES : THE NEWSPAPER TRICK : SASCHA, "MR. FACING BOTH WAYS"

LAYMEN have, as is but natural, a very confused conception of espionage, and to-day more than ever before. On this subject so much has been written by persons who, during the Great War, either occupied subordinate positions in which they could learn nothing, or never had anything to do with espionage. This explains the legendary history of that "Mademoiselle Docteur" who is supposed to have performed the most reckless feats of espionage in Paris, though in truth she never was in France during the war. Equally mythical are the "flights" alleged to have been made behind the enemy's lines.

It follows, therefore, that the spy—who, as already explained, is known professionally as an "agent"—is generally made to appear as a "hero." In actual fact, however, most of these people—there are, of course, noble exceptions—are staid business folk, adventurers, and others of dull existence who in the hope of gaining money and escaping detection set their lives on the hazard of the dice. They include both men and women. In this connection one singular fact deserves emphasis, even though it

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puts us men to shame. A female spy who is being led to execution comports herself, as a rule, with greater courage than her masculine colleague. Mata Hari, Gabrielle Petit and Edith Cavell all faced the rifles of the firing squad without a tremor, while, on the other hand, not a few male spies howled like beasts and had to be forcibly propelled to the place of execution.

Every State that is waging war punishes espionage with death, and rightly so. The instinct of self-preservation demands it. It was the Russian custom to hang spies. Elsewhere they were shot. Needless to say, no distinction was made between the sexes, not even in France, the land of "gallantry." It is an interesting fact, proved by statistics, that more women were executed in France than in any other country. It is relevant to recall the behaviour of Lieutenant Lody, who faced with exemplary fortitude the rifles of the British soldiers in the Tower of London. His heroic conduct compelled the highest admiration of his British judges, and it was in fulfilment of a debt of honour that on the last "heroes' commemoration day" his old comrades decked his grave with flowers. There were other heroes in this the most perilous of all war activities. None of these, however, was a professional spy. They engaged in espionage out of an ardent love of Fatherland, giving their lives for their country just as their brothers gave theirs at Verdun, on the Somme, at Kemmel, and on a thousand other fields of German heroism.

WOMEN SPIES

In contrast to these rare exceptions—they were found in all the belligerent States—who, like the soldiers in the trenches, sacrificed their lives for patriotism and not for lucre, no sympathy can be felt for the overwhelming majority of spies. And least of all for those who betrayed their own country, and who, by communicating important news to the enemy, burdened their consciences with the death of hundreds of brave comrades. For such as these the rifle bullet was too easy and too speedy a death. Among the so-called neutral spies, who did not hurt their own country and regarded their work as pure business, the most notorious was the Dutch woman, Margarete Zelle, whom we know under her stage name of Mata Hari.

Apart from the small band of burning patriots, who died for love of their people and their Fatherland and whose tombs are venerated and still tended with loving hands as shrines of devotion to duty and patriotism, most of the war-time spies lie in nameless graves. No cross, no mound of earth marks the place where they were roughly buried.

Apropos, I will briefly relate one episode. In the summer of 1915 we arrested a Polish spy and found in his pocket an accurate report on the artillery positions of our 8th Army. His guilt being fully established, he was sentenced to death. Two hours before his execution I visited him in his cell. He was composed and did not dispute the justice of his sentence. Softened by the approach of death, he told me his life story. His father, a worthless

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drunkard, had been stabbed in a brawl ; his mother had died of consumption. His youth had been a bitter one, and eventually he joined the revolutionary movement.

Whilst manufacturing a bomb his left arm was blown off at the shoulder. After that he begged his way through the villages of Poland, sleeping out in the summer. No one loved him, none cared for him. A young peasant girl whom he loved repulsed him because he was a cripple. Both his brothers fell in the Russo-Japanese War.

"There they lie in far-away Manchuria, thrust into the earth as I shall be thrust to-day. Do I fear death? No ; why should I? It is only an instant, and then everything will be over. What should I do in the world, a lonely stranger? Perhaps when the war is long past a peasant, digging over my grave, will unearth a skeleton. 'Some nameless person,' he will say. 'I wonder who he was and whether he had a wife and children who grieve for him?'" The condemned man gazed out of the window of his cell at the dreary autumn day. "No one will mourn for me," he muttered, drawing his hand across his eyes.

Two hours later, on the outskirts of the tiny village, he was shot. It was a neglected plot of land on which stood a small thatched cottage. A low mound of soil marked his grave.

Two years afterwards, in the autumn of 1917, I passed through the village again in the course of a duty trip. I remembered that Polish spy and went

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to the little thatched cottage. The peasant woman who had occupied it was dead a year ago. Neighbours had demolished and removed the wooden cottage for firewood. There remained only the chimney and a bench before the door, upon which the old woman had often sat. They had forgotten to take the bench. The plot of ground was thick with weeds, and of the low mound, marking that nameless grave, nothing was to be seen.

* * * * *

At the beginning of the war the methods used by spies in communicating intelligence were distinctly crude. Later, as counter-espionage became sharper, their methods grew much more refined.

In June, 1915, I was passing through a small Polish hamlet. The Town Major, a lieutenant of the Reserve, in private life a teacher, told me that he had arrested a young man who claimed to be a refugee from Warsaw but who was constantly mixing with the German troops. "We'll have to let him go now, however, as we simply can't prove anything against him. Three times have we searched him from head to foot without finding a thing," said the Town Major.

But I was up to the tricks and stratagems of these agents.

"Well," I said, "let us examine him once more. I happen to be an Intelligence Officer and a specialist in these matters."

As we entered the cell a young man sprang up

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from the bench and gave us a friendly laugh. But the laugh speedily subsided when I began to address him in Russian. Suddenly he seemed quite confused. "Is your Excellency a Russian officer in German uniform?" he stammered. "Something of the sort," I replied. Then I stared at him sharply, and the more I stared the more uneasy he became.

"Now, turn out your pockets and put everything on the table here," I commanded. A comb, a pair of scissors, a lead pencil, and finally a newspaper were produced. I unfolded the paper and held it against the light.

At this the young man turned deadly pale. "Do you see anything?" I asked the Town Major. "No." The young man then tried to snatch the paper from me. "You have given yourself away," I told him; "although as a matter of fact I had already found you out." I showed the puzzled Town Major the tiny, scarcely visible pin-pricks below many of the letters in the newspaper. "Well I'm blessed!" he exclaimed. Then I read him the message thus conveyed.

"The Army staff is at Lyck; two days ago an infantry division was railed towards the South. Austrian guns have arrived to bombard Ossowiecz."

The expression on the Town Major's face was none too intelligent. "Well," he grumbled, "who would have thought of such tricks? I don't pretend to be a Sherlock Holmes!" I handed the spy over to the court-martial at Lyck.

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This sort of stratagem was clumsy enough, and was only used at the beginning of the war. Equally so was the soap trick. A tablet of soap was divided either lengthwise or across and slightly hollowed out, a message being then inserted. The two halves were then joined and soaked in warm water until all trace of the dividing line disappeared. So treated, the tablet looked harmless enough to anyone not in the know. Women at first preferred to conceal messages in their hair—"bobbing" not having yet come into fashion. Another favourite hiding place was the sole of a shoe. The lower strip of leather was ripped off, a message placed between, and the sole sewn up again.

Early in the war Russian Intelligence Officers insisted that their agents should bring back picture postcards to prove that they had actually been in German territory. Needless to say, we soon tumbled to this. Stout walking sticks, which aroused no suspicion at the front, were often used as secret receptacles for messages. The top would be sawn off, hollowed out, and glued on again so skillfully as to defy all but the closest scrutiny. Only during the first month were we deceived by such crude and primitive devices, as I shall show later. The longer the war lasted the more ingenious became the spies' methods.

Some of our most successful encounters were with so-called "double agents," but in these cases one had to be more cunning than the enemy. It should be explained that a double agent is one who

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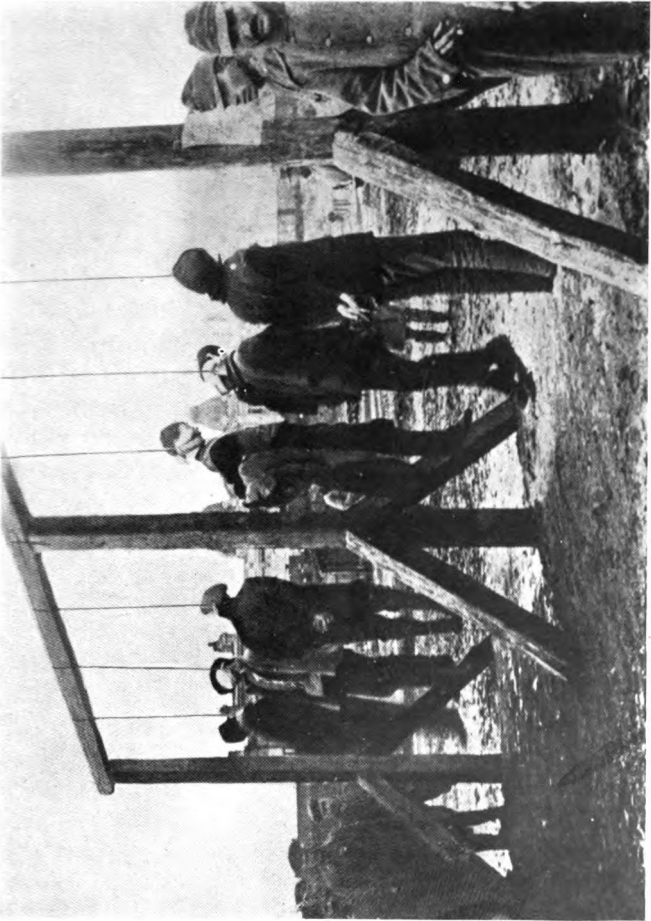
works for both sides at the same time. I often used such people with success, though sometimes, as might be expected when treading on such dangerous ground, I met with disappointment. One such episode I will briefly relate.

There was brought before me one day a young man whose refined features were in striking contrast to his shabby clothes. Interrogation elicited nothing, and as he had no papers he was about to be sent to a prisoners' camp. But in the course of a long conversation with him I found him to be exceptionally well informed about military matters.

I therefore had him brought to me again. After a short interview he offered his services as an agent against Russia. Three times he crossed the lines, each time bringing back good reports which tallied exactly with my identification of the Russian troops on our front. A fourth time I sent him across, to discover the whereabouts of the 3rd Caucasian Army Corps which had suddenly vanished and which I suspected of being in reserve to the south-east of Lomsha. From this mission he never returned.

About a week afterwards our army began its advance and we occupied the fortress of Lomsha, in which the staff of the Russian 6th Army had been quartered. Here our own staff took up billets.

Generally of an evening when my work was done I visited a tea-room where they served excellent Russian tea and genuine Russian cigarettes. The fact that the proprietor, an old Jew with a long caftan and snow-white curls falling beneath his



EXECUTION OF SPIES BY HANGING

THE NEWSPAPER TRICK

black satin skull cap, often gazed at me curiously did not interest me much—until one day we got into conversation.

“ Pardon me, Mr. Officer, but I hear from one of my Polish customers that you are the Intelligence Officer with the German army. May I beg you to come to my private room, as I have something private to tell you ? ” He gazed round him apprehensively.

In Belgium such an invitation to enter a back room would not have been without danger, but here in the East things were different. The frontier Jews were for the most part anti-Russian. Distrusted—not entirely without reason—by the military and civil authorities, they welcomed the German invasion. What the old Jew told me in his private room was extremely instructive.

The Russian Intelligence Officer of the 6th Army had left his principal secret agent behind in Lomsha in rear of our troops. This agent’s assistant was the Pole who was often in the old Jew’s company. Although this Pole had always treated him well, the Jew had no compunction in telling me the man’s address and thus delivering him into my hands. But in war, when the lives of thousands of comrades are at stake, one must use any and every tool.

After enjoining absolute silence on the old Jew, I had the Pole arrested by a military policeman and next morning brought before me. I opened on him with my heaviest guns by telling him bluntly

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that he had been unmasked as the assistant to the principal secret agent of the Russian 6th Army, and that, having remained behind our front, he would be shot in accordance with the laws of war.

The thrust went home. Down on his knees fell the Pole, begging for his life. I had no longer any doubt that he would betray his chief to me. "Think carefully over everything," I said sternly. "In three hours I will see you again. If you then tell me the whole truth and conceal nothing I will spare your life. Otherwise you will be shot to-day." He was then led away by the military police. In view of the fellow's extremity of fear I was confident that he would tell me everything he knew. And so it happened.

Three hours later to the minute the police brought him in to me again, and in a trembling voice he told me, broadly, all that he knew.

It was a fact that the chief agent had been left here in Lomsha to report on the movements of the German troops. His assistant, my prisoner the Pole, was to convey these reports across the lines, while the chief agent remained near our Staff headquarters. And, further, I learned something rather surprising ; the chief agent had been commissioned, with the promise of a rich reward, to deliver me alive to the Russians. On the previous evening but one they had followed me to a dingy side street, where but for the accident of a man looking out of a window they would have fallen upon and chloroformed me. Then I was to have been placed in a

peasant's cart, covered over with hay, and taken through a certain point in our lines.

As the first kidnapping attempt had failed and the chief agent now considered this method too dangerous, he had yesterday unfolded a new plan. A friend of his, a very pretty Polish woman, was to seek my acquaintance and invite me to her house. There she was to offer me drugged wine. The chief agent would then carry me out of the house and deposit me in the hay-covered cart. It was just what one reads in a crime "thriller," but in this case it was grim reality.

All the same, I had to laugh so heartily that the spy stared at me in consternation.

"I swear by the Holy Mother of God that it's all true, Mr. Officer!" He stammered.

"Come, now," I asked; "what's the name of your chief here?"

"What his real name is no one knows except the Russian Intelligence Officer on the staff of the 6th Army. We have only heard that he comes of a distinguished family and that his people have cast him off. As an agent he is known by the name of Sascha (the diminutive of Alexander). For the rest he's a blackguard who would walk over dead bodies without turning a hair. Not long ago he poisoned a girl here whom he had seduced."

"And where is the fellow hiding?"

He told me exactly where to find the man.

"But be careful, Sir," he warned me. "He always goes armed. Now, Mr. Officer, I swear by

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the Holy Mother of God that I have told you all and kept nothing back. Now you must keep your word, too! Nicht wahr? You won't shoot me now?"

"Of course I'll keep my word. You won't be shot, but I'll have to clear you out of the war zone. That is the mildest punishment I can reconcile with my conscience."

I wrote out the requisite order, and the Pole, calling down blessings on my head and praying that I might live a hundred years, was finally removed.

Then I went with the military policeman to take the chief agent. To avoid attracting attention I changed into mufti and only slipped a revolver into my pocket. We soon came to a pretty two-storied house, such as was occupied by citizens of the superior type in provincial Russian towns. With the safety catches on our hidden revolvers slipped back, we knocked on the door of the first floor. "Is Sascha at home?" I enquired in Russian, with an air of mystery.

Although we were in mufti and my Russian was fluent, the woman who had opened the door did not seem to trust us. But before she could slam the door in our faces I had inserted my knee and clapped my revolver to her head. So we forced our way in. The sight of the pistol had so terrified the woman that she was struck dumb, and without waiting we hastened into the nearest room.

The door stood ajar, giving us a view of the

SASCHA

interior. With his back turned to us stood a man, bending over a trunk in which he appeared to be searching for something.

"Hands up, Sascha!" I shouted. He sprang round and gazed at us, his hand going to his pocket, but the muzzles of our revolvers were pointing at him. Even though the confession of his accomplice had aroused certain suspicions in my mind, I was nevertheless struck speechless for a moment. For this chief agent was the identical young man who, not long since, had offered his services to me as a spy and who had never returned from his last mission behind the Russian lines. Even then I had suspected him of being a double agent. Now the fact stood confirmed.

The military police officer handcuffed him while I kept the fellow at the point of my revolver. "The game is up!" said Sascha, biting his lips. "Yes," I retorted, "it really is up and lying won't help you. Your accomplice has confessed everything."

"That son of a dog, Linkevitch!" hissed Sascha. "I never did really trust him. The coward! All right, I'll go quietly, but get it over quickly. I know my life is forfeit by the laws of war. There's one good thing, you will shoot me; whereas Russians use the rope."

This Sascha was, without exception, the most singular and mysterious of all the agents with whom I had to deal during the war. Despite his obvious guilt as a spy behind our troops and his proposed kidnapping of myself, I could not withhold a

certain feeling of sympathy. Who was he? What had induced him to hazard his life as a spy? He was obviously a man of birth and breeding. He had clear-cut features and was, as I could see, very well groomed.

"Who are you, really?" I asked him. "You don't look to me like a common spy."

"Who am I! Oh! well, it ought not to worry you whether you shoot me as Ivanoff, Smirnoff, or Petroff. And you can't force me to reveal my name."

"I shan't try to do that," I said. "But a little frankness might relieve your mind."

His mood seemed to change. This is the story he told, with many a meditative pause in the flow of words:

"I was probably brought up in the same social atmosphere as yourself. My father disowned me because I forged his name to a cheque for the sake of a *danseuse*. When I left home my mother pressed upon me her small savings—about five hundred roubles. As I stood at the door I heard her sobbing and pleading for me with my father. But he was hard and unrelenting. I was just about to be promoted to lieutenant, but after this scandal I couldn't return to the regiment. So I went to the dogs. It was just before the outbreak of war. The atmosphere was charged with electricity as if a thunderstorm were pending. Everybody knew war to be only a matter of days. In every officers' mess the talk was all of war."

"MR. FACING BOTH WAYS"

"That was your best chance to serve your country—even if only as a private soldier," I interpolated.

He shrugged his shoulders.

"In this atmosphere of July, 1914," he continued, "I lived a life of wild debauchery. When the war actually began I had only thirty roubles left in my purse. After the scandal about the cheque and the dancer there was no going back to my regiment. The Intelligence Officer of the 6th Army was a good friend of mine, so I went to see him and told him my story. He engaged me, and on that day I broke finally with the past. I underwent a complete change of heart and became another man, who was absolutely callous."

"Very well," I said. "I can understand all that, Sascha. But why didn't you come back that last time?"

He looked me straight in the face.

"Why didn't I come back? Well, I'll tell you quite frankly. I was working for both sides, and as you suspected this I found it impossible to collect any information which was worth reporting. So I stayed on the Russian side. But my subordinate agents will continue to work against you. I can tell you that quite calmly, since I am going to be shot."

Two hours later I heard that he had been sentenced to death by court-martial and shot. He had refused an offer to save himself by

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naming his accomplices. We searched his effects, but found nothing to indicate his identity. There was only the portrait of a very beautiful woman who, judging by the likeness, must have been his mother.

CHAPTER FOUR

GENERAL RENNENKAMPF DIES AT TAGANROG

LED by General Litzmann, the German 40th Army Corps had taken by storm the "impregnable" fortress of Kovno. After a brief bombardment several of the forts had blown up, and General Grigorieff, the commanding officer of the fortress, saved himself and his troops by flight. An enormous mass of war material fell into our hands. The Russian general's conduct was not exactly heroic, for he was one of the first to flee, leaving the fortress to its fate.

Soon afterwards he was arrested, and a rumour spread among the Russian troops that he had "sold" the fortress of Kovno. That, of course, was only one of the many nonsensical stories bred of war hysteria. What eventually happened to General Grigorieff I do not know. According to several reports he was shot. Be that as it may, he was never again employed in the war. To this day I have never had any reliable information as to his fate.

Similar foolish rumours were circulated about General von Rennenkampf, who became known through the invasion of East Prussia. It was

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obvious that these stories were not only not denied in official circles, but mildly encouraged by them. Certainly, from the German point of view, Rennenkampf's conduct at the Battle of Tannenberg was criminal.

He looked coolly on and did not raise a finger while the army of General Samsonoff was being annihilated. It is a singular and established fact that he acted in this affair not as a "German spy" but by reason of his personal animosity against General Samsonoff. We knew of a similar case in the Russo-Japanese War, when General Kuropatkin out of sheer jealousy frustrated a victory by General von Gripenberg. When Rennenkampf, following the destruction of his army in East Prussia, was given another army command north of the Vistula near Warsaw, he again failed egregiously and was then placed on the shelf, never to be employed again in the war. Only his friendship with the Grand Duke Nicholas saved him from a charge of espionage.

Later on he met with an appalling end, being executed by the Bolsheviki at Taganrog after undergoing horrible and agonising tortures. While it is true that the conduct of General von Rennenkampf during the war was such as to justify a suspicion of espionage in the lay mind, the fact remains that this suspicion was unfounded.

* * * * *

Since the war various books have appeared—mostly written by non-experts—which describe the

GENERAL RENNENKAMPF DIES AT TAGANROG

“pleasant and care-free life” led by high staff officers in contrast to conditions at the front. Such malicious stories, which are designed to minimise the superhuman achievements of the Army Staff in the eyes of the German nation, are, of course, pure inventions.

Field Marshal von Hindenburg, notoriously an early riser, used to come on duty at 7 a.m. and work till 11 p.m., an average of sixteen hours daily. He had the smallest possible staff, and there was scarcely an officer on the Hindenburg staff who did not put in at least fifteen hours of intensive labour each day.

In addition to my own fifteen to sixteen hours' daily work as Intelligence Officer, I had occasionally to perform night duty in the general staff room two or three times a week. Consequently, on two or three nights in the week I had no sleep at all. Always genial and friendly, Hindenburg used to shake hands with each of us every morning. If I had been on night duty he would ask me, with a friendly smile : “Anything new? What's my friend Nicholas Nikolaievitch (the Grand Duke Nicholas) doing? Hasn't he had enough yet?”

When, in the autumn of 1915, I reported to the Field Marshal that the Grand Duke Nicholas had been superseded—Rasputin brought about his fall—and that the Tsar had himself assumed the supreme command, he remarked : “Ah, now he *has* had enough. Well, we shall soon finish with the new Nicholas, too.”

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And so faithfully did the Field Marshal deal with his new opponent that by March, 1917, Nicholas II. had lost his throne.

Fairy tales have also been told about the sumptuous fare enjoyed by Staff officers. Actually our meals were of the simplest, so modest in fact that I, as a heavy eater, was never able really to satisfy my hunger. Field Marshal von Hindenburg ate exactly the same food as we did. Yet in spite of all we enjoyed our meagre rations. Nor did these conditions alter in the least when the Field Marshal became Chief of the General Staff. When I was transferred from the Eastern front to G.H.Q. in Kreuznach and Spa, I found there the same simple messing that we had experienced at an earlier date in East Prussia, at Kovno, and at Brest-Litovsk.

CHAPTER FIVE

A PRETTY SPY'S MASTERSTROKE

ONE of my best agents during the war was a Pole named Felix, who was fanatically anti-Russian. Very efficient, too, was his charming fiancée, Genia Josifovna. Over a long period these two brought me priceless information. They often penetrated not only to Russian headquarters, but far beyond. I will now relate a particularly daring adventure of theirs.

We had intercepted messages which revealed that big convoys of ammunition, destined for a new offensive, were being sent *via* Baranovitchi, where Russian H.Q. were then situated.

To prevent the arrival of these munitions I decided to have the railway line blown up at a point not far from Baranovitchi, and I asked Felix whether he would undertake the job. "Of course," he answered; "why not? I'll take Genia with me, as we shall have to carry a lot of stuff with us." I made enquiries which showed that the place selected for the explosion was a good one.

Equipped with dynamite and all other necessary gear we drove to the front just as dusk was falling. We had, of course, to drive very carefully lest we

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and the car were all blown up together. I had already informed the regimental commander in the sector concerned that I should be passing agents through his front that night.

I had the car stopped at regimental H.Q., a cosy dug-out in a dense wood. When I told the C.O. what was afoot he would not at first believe it. "And the pretty little lady is going, too?" asked the bewildered colonel, his gaze lingering on the charming features of Genia.

"She will certainly go with her fiancé," I rejoined; "and I haven't the least doubt that she has been over there many a time before. If you have an engineer officer handy, Colonel, it would be a great help to the enterprise if he would give my agent some technical hints."

"That shall be done at once." The colonel told his adjutant to call an officer of engineers who was in the neighbourhood. When he arrived he approved in all respects my plan, which aimed at blowing up the line as a train passed over it. An earlier explosion would probably give the game away by alarming the enemy. My plan, therefore, was adhered to.

Just before 9 p.m. we were in the trenches. The colonel came with us, "just to see for once how agents are passed through the lines"—as he put it. For the last time I repeated my instructions. The first trains were due to pass the selected point shortly before 5 a.m., that was to say, in about eight hours' time. The journey to the railway would



FELIX, GENIA'S FIANCE: ALSO A GERMAN
AGENT



GENIA, GERMAN SECRET SERVICE AGENT

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A PRETTY SPY'S MASTERSTROKE

the five hours. Felix thus had ample time to place his charges carefully in position. Genia would maintain some distance away to guard him against surprise.

I conducted Felix and Genia to the last advanced post. Apart from the howling of the wind, it was pathetically silent in the advanced sector. With a firm handgrip the pair took leave of us and I saw them both vanish into the darkness. I remained for about an hour with the outpost, to hear whether they had got through. Once across the lines they ran a little risk.

"They must be plucky souls," said the sentry, who for the first time in his life had seen a spy crossing into enemy territory. "It's true the Russian front in these marshes is thinly held, but still . . ."

It had been arranged that Felix and Genia should turn on the following night by the same route, and I ordered the sentry to tell his company commander that on no account were they to be fired at. I repeated this request to the regimental C.O. on my way back. "That's understood," he replied. "I wish them luck and hope they get back safely."

Next day, about noon, I went as usual to the general staff office. There I found a message to the effect that "the matter has been settled." One of the staff officers handed me an aviator's report which had just come in. It told us that at the point on the railway which I had indicated a locomotive lay right across the rails, blocking a

A PRETTY SPY'S MASTERSTROKE

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stretch of line that was of vital importance to the Russians. "A daring fellow, indeed!" said the staff captain, shaking his head.

And then, just before midnight, I was called up by the regimental commander at the front. "Your agent and the pretty girl are back again. They are with me in the dug-out. They would like to speak to you personally on the 'phone. They say the railway is blown up. According to him the locomotive is lying right across the rails."

"Quite correct, Sir," I answered. "The aviators have already reported it."

Two hours later I fetched Felix and Genia from Colonel K.'s dug-out. The place was packed with inquisitive people who wanted to get a glimpse of the daring agents who had "brought off" this audacious coup. Felix had to tell his story again and again. The new day had dawned before we at length left the dug-out behind us.

"Now, Genia Josifovna, how did it go off?" I asked the pretty little Pole when we were in the car. "Weren't you really frightened at all?"

"No, not in the slightest. The place was simply made for us. Not a soul in sight. When we heard the explosion and the locomotive was thrown right across the rails we ran away. For about an hour we kept on through the forest in the direction of the front. Then we hid in a thick covert and went to sleep. When dusk fell again we resumed our march. And now we are here—and I'm not a bit tired!"

CHAPTER SIX

SPYING FOR REVENGE : THE MAN IN THE DARK

WITH the exception of a Russian general staff captain, of whom I shall speak later, Felix was my best and most daring agent. At the time of his death I had worked with him two and a half years. Of course, I paid him, for he could not live on air and love alone. But his principal motive was not money, but revenge. During the revolution of 1905 the Russians had hanged his father for distributing revolutionary literature among the soldiers.

“ Please look upon me not as a paid spy, but as an employee,” he often said to me.

One day the signal officer with our army came to see me. He told me that for about two weeks past a new enemy wireless station had been heard, and by his reckoning it must be at Odessa. He presented me with a number of intercepts, which I deciphered in his presence. They were all, without exception, addressed to the commissariat officer of General Brussiloff's south-western army group in Galicia, and they dealt with equipment, commissariat, and kindred matters. I inferred from these messages that they related to new troop formations which were to be dovetailed into General

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Brussiloff's army group. The chief of staff of our army, to whom I submitted the matter, shared my view entirely. The sudden appearance of formidable and fresh enemy reinforcements on the Austrian front would be decidedly unpleasant, for the Austrian army was already being hard pressed by the Russians.

After a lengthy consultation with Felix I decided to send Genia to Odessa.

If it were true that new branches of the higher staff had been established there it should be possible with a little skill for Genia as a woman, and an exceedingly attractive woman at that, to make friends with officers and high military officials, and thus to learn more than Felix could hope to do. Apart from discovering what these new troops were, it was of capital importance for us to learn in what area they were to be used. The private soldiers would naturally be ignorant of their destination, but not so the staff officers. And that was Genia's second task : to find out which front these new troops were destined for.

Genia, having been furnished with cash for her journey, I took to the front. It was the same place from which, together with Felix, she had crossed the lines to blow up the railway at Baranovitchi. Colonel K. was genuinely delighted to see us again and entertained us to the best of his ability. Then he escorted us to the trenches and shook hands with Genia, wishing her the best of luck.

" This time, Colonel, I shall not be back so soon

as on the previous occasion. It will be from ten to twelve days before I return," she said smilingly, as she climbed over the trench parapet. I took her to the foremost post and listened intently. There was dead silence all round us ; nothing stirred.

" I must make haste while everything is so quiet, Herr Lieutenant. As we were coming back last time a Russian suddenly fired off a Verey light, and unless we had instantly thrown ourselves to the ground we must have been caught," she told me.

" I shall stay here with the sentry for about an hour," I said, " in case anything happens. After that, of course, we shall shoot. If all is quiet I shall then go back to staff headquarters. Well, keep a stiff upper lip, and the best of good fortune ! "

So quiet was the night that we might have been living in profoundest space. Far and wide, not a shot nor any other noise broke the silence. All life seemed to have faded away or to be sunk in slumber.

" Just like manœuvre time," remarked the sentry.

Eleven days later Colonel K. called me up. " Your little lady is here again. You had better come quickly ; she has very important news for you." Her report was indeed almost incredible !

When I reached the dug-out she almost fell on my neck with joy. " This time I have really brought you something fine : in Odessa the formation of the new 7th Army under General Scherbatsheff has been completed. Four army corps. I have written down the numbers of all the regiments, and in four weeks this new army will entrain for the front, to

join the south-west army group of General Brusiloff."

"What a splendid girl you are!" I exclaimed in genuine admiration. "You'll get extra pay for this."

"No, no! I didn't mean that," she pouted. "You don't know what a reward it is to me to be able to give you great pleasure. I won't accept any extra pay. Is Felix at home?"

I was sorry to have to disappoint her. "Not at the moment. He's organising a new carrier pigeon station 'over there.' But he'll be back in about four days' time."

It was already after midnight when we reached my quarters, a cottage on the outskirts of the village. Suddenly Genia clutched my arm. "Oh! Lieutenant, quick. There—there he is!" She stepped forward fearfully. "That's the man who followed me, the man I told you about." Drawing my revolver I sprang into the shadow, but it was already too late. The fellow vanished into the darkness, as though the earth had swallowed him up. With my servant and the two military police who were quartered with me I searched the neighbourhood thoroughly, but in vain. Nor did we find him next day. He had disappeared without trace.

Genia, who had previously been so merry and had laughed so heartily, suddenly became another woman. As she sat opposite to me she was deadly pale, and her hands trembled. "That was 'he,'"

THE MAN IN THE DARK

she said more to herself than to me. "I know that one day he'll keep his word and destroy me. Just because I repulsed him. After all, one can't love to order. Oh ! how I loathe that fellow ! He has sworn to be revenged on Felix. An eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth. But I'm going on fighting," she added, with grim resolution. "One of us must go under, he or I."

When poor little Genia said this she certainly did not foresee how soon the ghastly decision was to be made.

For long we sat together in silence, until weariness overcame her utterly. "It's nerves," she remarked. "First ten days 'over there' and then to see that beast here in the darkness."

I took Genia by the arm and led her home.

CHAPTER SEVEN

GENIA AT RUSSIAN G.H.Q. IN ODESSA

THE following morning Genia gave me an account of her trip to Odessa. As early as the second day she had got into conversation with a General Staff colonel in a café, and that evening he took her to the theatre.

“He was terribly in love,” she laughed ; “and on that I based my plan. It was perfectly clear that he would tell me everything if I questioned him cleverly enough. In order to gain his confidence I told him a most moving story. I had fled from Warsaw when the Russian troops retreated. Then I had stayed in Kieff until recently, when I had come to Odessa to find some distant relations. But in the meantime these relations had moved to Moscow. As I had no longer enough money to pay my fare to Moscow, I had perforce remained in Odessa.”

“Very good, very clever,” said I approvingly. At this Genia blushed—either from joy at my praise or because, as I knew from a dozen signs, she set great store on my good opinion of her, and was rather ashamed of the part she had played in this venture, seeing that she was a girl of good family

and exceptional education. Later on, however, I was able to solve this little mystery. It must not be forgotten that here was no case of a woman plunging into the gravest risks from sordid motives. On the contrary, Genia was a gently-bred girl, who was actuated in everything she did—as I knew even then—by her love for Felix and, still more, her desire for revenge on the Russians.

“Next, he wanted to give me money,” she continued after a brief pause. “He hadn’t the faintest suspicion of me. I accepted the hundred roubles which he pressed into my hand, and then—please understand, Lieutenant, that I dared not incur a breath of suspicion—I gave him the address of the modest boarding house where I was staying.”

“Splendid,” I observed. “It all sounds like a novel from the life.”

“So it is. I was really sorry for the poor Colonel. It’s not a pleasant thing to play with emotions. But hear me further. Next morning the proprietress knocked at my door, and there stood a soldier, the Colonel’s servant, with an enormous bouquet of flowers, several boxes of sweetmeats, and a note. The Colonel wrote that after coming off duty he would call and take me out to supper. After that we met every day and each time I learned more, until at last I had everything I wanted.”

“When I look at you now,” I exclaimed in genuine admiration, “my heart grieves for the Colonel !”

All of a sudden Genia became quite frivolous,

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though her mood did not strike me as completely genuine. "When I think about it now I have to laugh frightfully," she cried. "It was the evening before I left Odessa—and on that evening he made me an offer of marriage. To avert suspicion I accepted him. While we were celebrating our 'betrothal' I was pondering my plans for escaping. To lull him into security I told him that I would like to travel to Moscow on the following day to tell my relations of my engagement. He took the parting badly. On the other hand, he was terribly thrilled that I was taking the matter seriously. 'I shall be back in a week and then we can get married,' I consoled him.

"Of course, he took me to the station and bought me a ticket for Moscow, and gave me three hundred roubles to cover my expenses in Moscow and pay the return fare. It was a most 'moving' farewell. Two hours later I left the train, tore the Moscow ticket into small pieces, and boarded a train that was going to the front. Well, that's all there is to it, and now I'm here!"

To the best of my knowledge, this was the only case in the whole war in which a woman not merely reported the formation of a new army in all its details, but named the sector of the front to which it was to be despatched.

Genia Josifovna refused to accept extra pay. The very suggestion seemed to upset her. Soon, however, she was as merry and light-hearted as before. She seemed even to have forgotten yester-

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day's encounter with the man who had followed her.
“ But if you were to offer me some of your official
port wine, I shouldn't refuse,” she laughed.*

* I always carried a case of wine with me. This wine often
loosened the tongues of the most taciturn, and by its aid I was able
to bring to justice some of the enemy's most stubborn spies.

CHAPTER EIGHT

A DOSE OF MEDICINE : CARRIER PIGEONS

Two days later Felix returned from his "carrier pigeon mission," which he had very skilfully performed. He now stood in my room, a sort of turret chamber, and kept gazing out of the window while he made his report.

"Quick, come to the window, Lieutenant !" ; he suddenly exclaimed. I sprang to my feet and was with him in a couple of strides.

"Do you see that man over there in the brown cloak, with the sporting cap pulled over his eyes ? A while ago he was following me. I could swear that I have seen him 'over there' among the Russians."

Through the curtain I saw the man look into a shop window and then pace slowly away.

"It is he !" Felix cried in excitement.

"Kramm, come quickly !" I shouted into the next room. An instant later the military policeman stood by me at the window. "Do you see that man in the brown cloak standing over there ?"

"Yes, Sir !"

"Good, then show me what you can do. Bring the fellow to me in ten minutes. Have you got handcuffs ?"

"Yes—always," and he motioned to his right-hand pocket as he made for the door. Kramm unobtrusively sidled across the road in a diagonal direction. As we were able to observe from the window, the man in the brown cloak did not turn round and had obviously failed to notice that Kramm, who as usual wore mufti, had left my house. Again the man stood, hands in pockets, before a shop window. From my corner window I was able to survey the whole street and follow all the proceedings. Kramm slowly approached his victim. Now they were in conversation, and then the man in the brown cloak swiftly raised his right hand.

"Did you see how he put his hand to his mouth?" Felix exclaimed.

"Yes, Felix, but that won't help him much."

Kramm now seized his man with the skill born of long practice. Two soldiers who were passing sprang to his aid; but the man put up a fierce resistance and the group fell struggling to the ground. When they rose the man in the brown cloak wore handcuffs. Five minutes later he stood before me.

"Why have I been arrested and handcuffed?" he demanded, speaking with a Yiddish accent.

"Why? Because you are a Russian agent! Kramm, bind his feet so that he can only take short steps. Then put him in the cellar and stay with him until I send for you!"

I now rang up a staff surgeon, who was well known to me, and briefly recounted the circum-

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stances. "All right," was his answer. "I'll send you at once by my servant such powerful purgatives and emetics that in twenty minutes at the latest you'll have the *corpus delicti*—that I'll answer for!" laughed the doctor.

With these medicaments in my pocket I proceeded to the cellar. Sitting in a corner was the prisoner, bound hand and foot, while the military policeman paced up and down. I took the latter aside and asked him, in a whisper, whether the fellow had swallowed anything. "Yes," was the reply; "there's no doubt about that."

I then turned to the spy. "If you have a clear conscience," I told him, "you will freely take these two medicines which I have here. If you refuse you will have to take them by force."

"Really! Well, my conscience is clear enough, but in spite of that I'm not going to take the stuff. No doubt you want to poison me."

I went close up to him and stared in his face.

"While you were outside in the street you swallowed some little object. And I would like to have this little thing as proof, so that I can stick you up against the wall."

"Swallowed? I? Some little object?" stammered the fellow, who was white as chalk and stared at me with glassy eyes in which was reflected the fear of death. "I have swallowed nothing," he added in a toneless voice.

I rang the bell and two more military policemen entered the room. "The three of you ought to be

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able to manage it. And when it's over bring what you find to me upstairs."

With these words I left them. The staff surgeon had not exaggerated. The medicines certainly were "powerful." Ten minutes later the military policeman came to me and laid on the table a small aluminium capsule. As we opened it a tiny slip of paper fell out. It bore a stamp and read as follows :

<p>H.Q. 4TH ARMY ESPIONAGE DIVISION.</p>
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This was the usual credential given to agents to facilitate their passage through the Russian front. When I showed the paper to the man he denied nothing further. "Now I shall be shot, I suppose?"

"Naturally," I answered. "Every country at war punishes spying with death."

"But if I give away the other men who were left behind in the town by the Russian spy service, will you then spare my life?"

"Certainly," I replied; "but only, you understand, if we establish the truth of what you tell us."

"But what guarantee have I got that you really won't shoot me after all?"

"The word of a Prussian officer."

At this he relapsed once more into Yiddish dialect, exclaiming: "*A Wort von ä preissische*

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Offizier is gut!” He then told us, without the slightest hesitation or moral scruple, the names and addresses of four other agents in the town.

“And what’s your pass-word?”

“The pass-word is ‘Wyeter.’” (Russian word meaning “wind.”)

These four men whom their colleague had betrayed were taken by a method which I had often employed to good purpose. Besides my civilian clothes I always had in my trunk a Russian officer’s uniform. As I spoke Russian fluently and without an accent, my disguise was never once penetrated in all the four years of war. Many an agent who had been repeatedly interrogated without result was led to betray himself by my fluent Russian combined with the officer’s uniform.

I now gave Felix the secret pass which we had taken from our prisoner and sent him to interview the first agent of the four.

“I have a particularly important job for you,” said Felix, displaying the pass. The latter had its effect. “An officer of the Russian general staff wants to speak with you at once, and I have orders to take you to him.”

Quite unsuspectingly the agent came with him.

When the spy entered my room I unbuttoned my civilian cloak and let him see the Russian uniform. Then I asked for his “report.” When this was forthcoming and the man stood self-convicted of espionage, I pressed a bell. Before the spy could open his mouth he was seized by three military

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police officers. Three times was the scene repeated, and in less than five hours I had them all under lock and key, ripe for the court-martial. I then called up the commandant and asked for four soldiers to take charge of the prisoners.

Then I went down to the cellar where the four-fold traitor in the brown cloak was detained, and told him that as his confession had been verified I would keep my word. He would not be shot but interned in a prisoners' camp for the rest of the war.

"And what's going to happen to the four agents you arrested?" he asked hoarsely.

"That's a matter for the court-martial, but after what you have told us they are pretty sure to be shot."

"Shot?" he repeated, with lips pressed together.

"Yes, shot. But why do you ask? They won't know whom they have to thank for it," I said with righteous disgust. "Better four than your own precious self."

He was clearly breaking down. A military policeman conducted him to the commandant's quarters, whence on the following day he would be despatched to a prisoners' camp.

Next morning a soldier who unlocked the cell hastily stepped back. There from an iron grating hung the man in the brown cloak, his features terribly convulsed and tinged with blue.

He who, out of cowardly fear of the rifle bullets of the firing squad, had sent four of his comrades to

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their deaths just to save his own precious life had now executed himself.

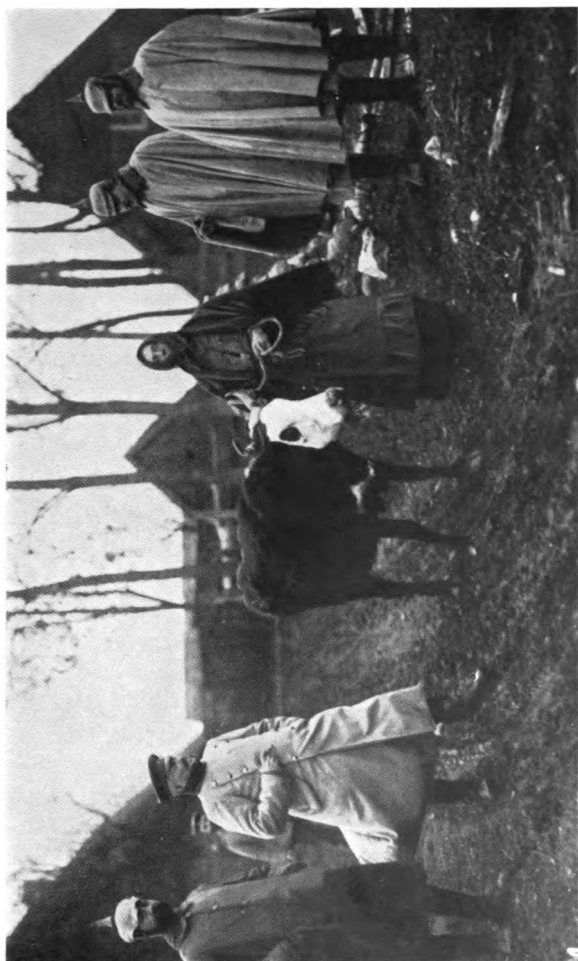
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During the war carrier pigeons on the Eastern front played a not unimportant *rôle*, busily and accurately conveying many a momentous message. It must always be a source of wonder how these little creatures fly straight as an arrow and with unfailing certainty to their homing point.

I had provided myself with a number of these birds, and what we now wanted was to find a reliable agent far behind the Russian front who from time to time would despatch the pigeons with important news. Still more difficult would it be to get the birds across to the agent. It would mean taking them right through the front.

Even if the messenger contrived to penetrate the front at night with a small basket of pigeons, his troubles would by no means be over. Anywhere near the front a man carrying a parcel at once attracted notice, however harmless he might appear. The messenger would have to be uncommonly smart, and he must, of course, take a circuitous route. This, then, was the most difficult part of our task : to get the pigeons across the lines.

"I know of two absolutely trustworthy fellows who will help me to take the twenty pigeons to the other side," Felix assured me. "Of course, we shall keep to the woods and the marshes and most probably won't meet a soul. I shall go on about a



THE GERMAN SOLDIER, SITKE, WHO, DISGUISED AS A PEASANT WOMAN, RECONNOITRED
RUSSIAN POSITIONS



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hundred paces ahead, so as to be able to run back and give warning of any danger. Each of my friends can carry ten pigeons. I'll take the little capsules and the paper with me."

I should here explain that the messages, written on the finest and thinnest paper, were enclosed in a tiny aluminium capsule which was then attached to one of the pigeon's legs. This, however, was not all. First, the spies had to hand over the pigeons to the despatching agent during the night so as not to excite suspicion. Next, the agent had to keep the birds well hidden, for every possessor of pigeons was naturally suspect, on the German side no less than on the Russian.

And even then the matter was not ended. A pigeon rising into the air was always an object of suspicion. As they always rose in narrow spirals on leaving the ground it was not difficult to determine the point of their departure. In fact, an expert could name the starting point with absolute precision. Consequently, the despatching agent "over there" had to go about his work with the utmost skill and circumspection. Only the remotest farm premises were used, where one was not likely to be disturbed by inquisitive neighbours.

A carrier pigeon flying over the front always drew attention by reason of its arrow-straight course. Needless to say, they invariably aroused suspicion and were fired at by both sides. At a careful estimate 30 per cent. of these pigeons were shot down. I had therefore given orders that every

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message must be sent in duplicate by two separate birds. If one were brought down there was always the possibility that the other would get through.

"But," the layman may reasonably ask, "was it worth while to convey these pigeons across the front when the undertaking was fraught with such peril, besides exposing the agent on the other side to so much danger? After all, the messages could have been conveyed by human carriers without much risk."

That is true up to a point, and we should not have used carrier pigeons at all if it had been possible to substitute human messengers in every case.

In order to keep in touch with developments in the enemy hinterland we had to maintain there permanently a considerable number of agents, each of whom was responsible for a specified sector. But the supply of agents was not unlimited. Intelligent and absolutely trustworthy men were scarce, quite apart from the fact that the carrier pigeon was from ten to twenty times faster than the human messenger. A few agents equipped with pigeons, distributed at wide intervals, were of more use than ten times the number working without pigeons.

As already stated, by my instructions each message was despatched twice by separate birds. In practice this turned out to be very important. In six cases out of ten only one pigeon got through safely; the others must have been shot down over the front either by our own people or the Russians.

CARRIER PIGEONS

I will here cite one case in which neither agent nor wireless intercept could replace the gallant pigeon. By order of Russian G.H.Q. the 19th Army Corps—a particularly good unit—then in reserve at a place east of Ossowiecz, was to be entrained at once, and thirty-six hours later was to break through our thinly-held front at Mitau. The wireless station of the 19th Army Corps was moved accordingly, without the fact being announced as it usually was. It would have taken an agent at least twenty hours to bring us the news, and we should, therefore, not have had time to reinforce the threatened sector.

Moreover, the Russians had taken special measures to keep these troop movements secret, and the front in the neighbourhood of Ossowiecz was so strongly patrolled that it would have been impossible for the time being for an agent to get through. So all our measures seemed fruitless.

In this emergency the carrier pigeon agent in the zone concerned proved himself to be particularly smart and cautious. He despatched three pigeons with the same message, because they had to fly over the fortress of Ossowiecz. The result vindicated his lavish use of the pigeons. Two were shot down over Ossowiecz, so that had no more been sent we should never have received this vital report.

One got home. On a minute scrap of paper which I took out of the aluminium cylinder stood these words: "Transfer of 19th Army Corps began early to-day. Army Corps will attack both

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sides of the Riga-Mitau road, and immediately after arrival."

I at once had the wires cleared for an important General Staff conference, and called up the Intelligence Officer of the army concerned. The result was that our reinforcements arrived in the nick of time : in other words, a single carrier pigeon had saved the situation. When the Russians attacked they suffered heavy losses and were compelled to retire.

That, of course, is only one example out of many. The industrious carrier pigeon was in many cases simply indispensable, and it will be just the same in future wars.

CHAPTER NINE

THE HOUSE IN THE PRIPET MARSHES

ONE day Felix returned from a mission "over there" wearing a serious expression. "I don't like it," he said. "Somewhere in the neighbourhood of Pinsk there must be a Russian agent who has a line of communication with the Russians running through the Pripet swamps and the woods. I am sure that somewhere in those marshes the Russians have a secret telephone wire which we haven't spotted."

Felix then told me that while in Mogileff he had overheard a conversation which indicated that a Russian agent near Pinsk was sending reports, apparently by telephone, to a position behind the Russian front. In this connection mention had been made of the Pripet swamps and the adjacent forest, parts of which were almost inaccessible and therefore quite unknown to the German troops.

I myself had been surprised at the rapidity with which the Russians got to know of the transfer of some of our divisions to the Western front.

Accompanied by Felix, I went first to Pinsk, intending to explore the surrounding country. This was none too easy. If the Russian agent were

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ensconced anywhere in the Pripet marshes, whether in a tiny hut or a covert in the woods, I might seek him in vain for weeks on end.

"Only luck can help us here," said I.

And actually it did help us.

Obviously I could not stay all that time at Pinsk just to follow up this matter, important though it was. So having obtained a general idea of the situation, I left it to Felix and Petrovski to search further, both having already proved their powers in this respect.

Furthermore, I called together all the military police in the army zone and made a special appeal to them to leave nothing undone in their endeavours to trace the dangerous spy. Then I went back to the staff, where other important work awaited me.

Twelve days later Felix called me up. I was to come to Pinsk if possible. He believed he had found the right place. More he did not wish to say over the 'phone.

That evening Felix, Petrovski and I sat in a tea house. The landlord was a German-Russian who was genuinely pleased to see us. Noticing that we did not wish to be disturbed, he went into another room. Felix now began his story.

"I should probably not have found it at all if I hadn't met a Pole here who has had no use for the Russians since they sent his mother to Siberia. It was he who told me about the old mansion of Zahorskoie. It lies just north of the swamp in a wild and desolate region. As it is right off the track

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of everything, no Germans are quartered there. The Pole believes the house to contain some mystery."

"Why?" I enquired.

"Well," he answered, "there is no direct proof, but I also think there's something odd about the place. Unfortunately, it's not possible to gain an entry into the grounds because of two big, ferocious dogs that prowl about day and night. Every night there is a light in the cellar, though the only person in the mansion is an old serving man. I believe there's a secret behind it all. My curiosity being excited, I determined to pay a visit to Zahorskoie next day.

"Some five kilometres from the old mansion there is a tiny, miserable village, if one can call six peasant cottages with thatched roofs a village.

"I gave out to the peasants that I was a travelling merchant, and as I had two bottles of brandy with me we soon fell into talk. Here, too, as elsewhere in that God-forsaken region, no troops were quartered. When I told the peasants that I wouldn't take any payment for the brandy they were delighted.

"After a few glasses these half-starved folk, who had not seen alcohol for ages, became quite garrulous. Very carefully I steered the conversation round to the old mansion.

" 'I recently passed the place in my cart,' I remarked, 'and saw at some distance in the grounds a man playing with a couple of dogs. He seemed to be an old fellow with grey hair. The dogs must

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be frightfully fierce, for they hurled themselves against the park gates and wouldn't stop barking.'

" 'Yes, indeed, the dogs are very fierce,' the peasants told me, 'and we wouldn't advise you to visit the park. The owners were proud people who cleared out with the Russians, leaving only an old servant behind.'

" Suddenly a peasant woman broke into the conversation, telling us that a few days ago she had offered some eggs at the mansion and had a talk with the old servant.

" 'I am not so stupid as you may think, Sir,' she said. 'Before I was married I had a place in St. Petersburg with a big official of the Ochrana (political police), and I saw and heard a great deal on every side. This morning I couldn't help thinking about the old mansion, and then I was struck with a really surprising idea. I believe the old servant is keeping a woman there as a prisoner.'

" I gave the peasant woman, who really did not look stupid, a glass of brandy, and begged her to continue.

" 'Why do I believe that?' she went on. 'Well, I'll tell you, and you can then say what *you* think about it. Two things surprised me. The old servant to whom I was trying to sell the eggs had snow-white hair, but in contrast to this his face was remarkably youthful. I gazed at him hard.

" 'What are you staring at me for?' he demanded harshly. I looked very downcast and answered that I hadn't been staring. Then I

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asked him if the gentry were away. "Of course, they're away," he replied. "With the Russians. What would they be doing here among the Germans? I'm all alone except for the dogs."

"On my way home I couldn't help thinking all the time of this old man who had such a young face. I was so plagued with curiosity that yesterday afternoon I decided to visit the house again to have another look at him from a distance. I felt in my bones there was some mystery there. I could not get the old fellow with snow-white hair and young face out of my head.

"I passed along the wall of the park by a field path which is seldom used, especially in the autumn. A cart going that way would get bogged in the mud. The path is lined with dense woods and spinneys. I had not been waiting long when I saw standing at a window in the first storey a young and pretty woman. At the same moment she stepped back from the window. Judging by the description of her it must be the Countess herself.

"Of course, I was taken aback, remembering what the old servant had said. Why had he lied to me by saying he was all alone? Who is the woman? Is it the Countess, and, if so, why is she in hiding? Is the old servant keeping her a prisoner? Well, that's how it is, Sir. What do you think about it?"

"I was careful to appear rather innocent, and expressed my view that probably the old man was a criminal who was holding the young Countess by

force. My actual opinion, however, was quite different.

"I privately gave the peasant woman five roubles and asked her in a whisper to speak to me alone. Then I said to her aloud : ' It's too late for me to get back to Pinsk ; my horse would be liable to break his legs on these awful roads. Whether I like it or not, I'll have to spend the night here.'

"Noticing that the five roubles had not been without effect, I enquired of the peasant woman whether she could put me up for the night if I paid for my lodging.

" ' Certainly you may stay,' she replied. ' There is also a little stable for your horse. I'll make room for you at the stove and I myself will sleep on the bench.'

"So, after distributing a handful of cigarettes among the villagers, I accompanied the peasant woman. Happening to look round, I saw meaning smiles on the faces of several of the peasants.

"No doubt they thought I was seeking an amorous adventure ! In due course I got the woman to tell me her story again in full detail."

Felix had now finished his very interesting report, and he looked at me expectantly.

"What do you think of the business?" he asked.

"Well, that's not so easy to say at the moment. I'll turn it all over in my mind to-day. In any case, I must pay a visit to the place myself. We can discuss it again in the morning."

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At this we left the tea shop and went out into the miserable autumn night and the drenching rain. Not a soul was to be seen in the darkened streets.

"Many thanks, Felix," I said at parting. "I believe you have brought off a really fine piece of work."

I had put up at an hotel—or, at any rate, a sign to that effect hung above the door. But according to German ideas it was simply a miserable little room which no one in Germany would have thought of describing as a hotel apartment. A grubby-looking waiter, who also filled the rôles of hall porter and domestic, brought me tea.

I was now anxious to get my plans quite straight. The peasant woman cannot have been by any means stupid ; she obviously had a good instinct for detective work. Without doubt the old servant at the mansion had dyed his hair. But why ? And why had he told the lie about his being alone. What was the young woman or the young girl doing at the mansion ?

I pondered the matter further. Was it not possible that the old servitor was the Count himself, and the woman at the window the Countess, both of whom the Russians had left to act as spies behind the German front ? Was this the Intelligence centre or perhaps the terminal point of the telephone cable which Felix had heard about in Mogileff ?

Many ideas and plans raced through my brain, but I discarded them all. It was three o'clock in

the morning before I had worked out my scheme. This I laid before Felix when he came to breakfast at nine.

Wearing tattered civilian clothes, I proposed to present myself at the deserted mansion in the guise of a Russian officer prisoner of war who had escaped, and to beg for shelter. If the man did not see through me I should have gained a point. It would then be my task to win the confidence of the "servant," who was probably the Count himself. After that everything must be decided on the spot according to circumstances. I never doubted for a moment that by taking this course I was thrusting myself into the lion's den. On the other hand, I reflected, I had often posed as a Russian officer and, so far, had never incurred the slightest suspicion. I was fully versed in Russian military affairs and had in St. Petersburg many acquaintances among the officers there.

Felix, it is true, wrung his hands and implored me to give up this plan, which he considered far too dangerous; but my resolve was unshaken. Felix and Petrovski were to accompany me, and the peasant woman also. Not, of course, into the mansion itself: entry there was reserved for me alone.

My three companions were to wait on the woodland path, from which they would have a good view of the old mansion. I would try at all costs to keep to the front rooms—that is, those that faced towards the path. If danger threatened me I would flash

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three short signals from the window with my electric torch.

If I did not report myself within twenty-four hours, Felix, Petrovski and the peasant woman were to force their way into the house.

We started on the following morning. When I looked at myself in the mirror I had to laugh. The suit was too big for me and it was decidedly shabby. I doubted whether even a close acquaintance would recognise me in this rig-out.

* * * * *

"Who's there?" demanded a voice in the Polish tongue as I pulled at the rusty bell chain. "What do you want at this late hour?"

"Come to the gate!" I answered in Russian. "I have something important to tell you."

Slowly and distrustfully the old servant came nearer, holding a lamp in his hand, and followed by the two dogs. He held the lamp aloft and shone it in my face. At this moment I looked closely at him and at once noticed how youthful his countenance was in contrast to the white hair.

"Are you friendly to the Germans?" I asked.

"Why do you ask?"

"Because I am an escaped Russian officer who wants to get through to the Russian front," was my answer.

As I was speaking the man had masked his lamp, and he appeared to be considering.

"What proof have I that you're not a spy, a

decoy?" came his voice again, out of the darkness.

"My name," I answered shortly, calmly giving the name of an old and well-known family of the Russian nobility. "Let me come in at least for the night. It's raining so hard and is so cold. Or are you a friend of the Germans? If so, I'll continue on my way before you betray me."

I could hear from his voice that my words had not been without effect.

"I will give you shelter for one night, but tomorrow you must leave," said the supposed servant. "It's too dangerous for me. So far we have been spared having troops billeted on us, but we must always reckon with that possibility, even though we lie right away on the marshes. If you as a Russian officer were captured here I should certainly be shot."

When I was forming my plans in Pinsk I had guessed that the "old man" was merely acting the part of a servant. Now I was convinced of it. He was now speaking Russian to me with such an educated accent that I said to myself: "Old man, old man, you're playing your part very badly, making many mistakes!"

I entered the lion's den.

"Please go first," said the servant.

Our footsteps echoed uncannily in the great hall, dimly lighted by a small lamp on the wall. One of the two dogs was at our heels, the other having remained in the park.

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Quite innocently I enquired of the servant whether, as a matter of courtesy, I might announce my arrival to the gentry of the house and thank them for their hospitality.

"That would be difficult," said the old man, "seeing that Count Oginski is with the Countess in St. Petersburg and I am all alone here with the two dogs."

I had put off my sodden cloak and seated myself in a deep armchair. The lamp now stood on the table, bathing me in light, while the great hall lay in semi-darkness. A few paces away crouched the dog, his eyes fixed steadily upon me.

I was positive that in the next few hours my life would be at stake. One of us twain would have to go under. While I was thinking this I heard a faint bell tinkling. Not a doubt of it: that was a telephone which appeared to be in the cellar directly below me. The dog growled, while the old man cast a furtive glance at me to see whether I had noticed anything. But I merely asked innocently why the dog had suddenly growled, and again the old man was deceived.

"Probably someone passing behind the park wall," he replied. "In this part of the world you find ragamuffins everywhere. It's unpleasant to be so lonely here at night."

As I sat in the armchair with the lamp shining full upon me and talked to the old man, I suddenly and distinctly saw, close by, a heavy curtain move. I drew my hand across my eyes. No, it was not a

dream : a woman's eyes were gazing at me fixedly. So the peasant woman's sight had been good !

And another thought flashed through my head—probably behind that curtain was the entrance to the cellar. At least two minutes had passed since the telephone bell had rung, during which time the mysterious woman had probably answered the call.

Thus in the first ten minutes of my visit I had discovered much. Already I knew three important facts. First, the man who posed as servant had dyed hair and was probably the Count himself ; secondly, there was a woman in the house, probably the Countess ; thirdly, the secret telephone was in the vaults, exactly beneath where I was sitting.

For the moment, it is true, I was in a trap, for I did not rightly know which of the rooms faced towards the road. I had to find that out as quickly as possible, for the Count and the woman were certain to have determined to sell their lives as dearly as possible. If I could discover the room in question I should be saved, for both Felix and Petrovski were well armed and could force their way into the mansion in a few minutes.

These thoughts were passing through my brain when I heard once more the faint tinkle of the telephone bell in the cellar. Again glancing at me apprehensively, the servant enquired whether I would like to be shown to my room. I had only been waiting for that.

The ancient mansion was much larger than it appeared to be from the road. It had a deep

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frontage on the park. We passed through a long, low-ceilinged corridor which had doors only on the left side. Here and there on the other side, about six feet above the ground, were small barred windows. Through these, the moon having suddenly appeared in the sky, I saw clearly the silhouette of trees. So the road lay to the right of the corridor! The servant now opened one of the doors and lighted a huge, old-fashioned lamp.

"This is not really a bedroom," he explained, "but it's nice and warm. I will make you up a bed on the sofa."

When he had left the room I stepped to the window before which hung a heavy and ancient curtain. Drawing this back I saw that the window opened not on to the park, but into a lighting shaft. The room was a handsome one, with heavy old furniture and two massive bookcases set against the wall.

While the servant was making up the bed on the sofa I studied him intently. The hair was dyed, but badly so. It had partly grown since the process and at the roots it was black. After laying me an appetising supper, including a bottle of wine, he took a respectful leave, mentioning that he was now about to turn the second dog loose.

"So many tramps wander about the wood," he told me. "To-day there have been more than usual. The dog in the park has been continually growling and running to the gate."

I had not the least doubt that I should now be

kept under observation from some hidden place. It was not an accident that I had been given this room. This large and ancient mansion, which must contain at least thirty rooms, certainly possessed a guest chamber.

Was the food poisoned? No, that was hardly likely. But as for the wine I preferred to leave it alone, since there was a probability that it was drugged. After glancing through several of the books I simulated a yawn and began to undress. I had, as a matter of fact, discovered the secret watcher. Between the two bookcases hung an old portrait of a knight, and as I was accidentally passing this I saw two human and sparkling eyes disappear from behind the pierced eye-holes of the picture.

I put out the lamp and stretched myself on the sofa. Behind the wall on which hung the portrait I heard soft footfalls. Then everything was silent as the grave, but for the monotonous patter of rain drops. By this time I was convinced that the Count and Countess distrusted me, and that the victor in this contest would be he who got his blow in first.

In letting the second hound loose in the park the Count had made a blunder for which he was to pay heavily. I knew that Felix had brought three police dogs with him, and these would certainly do their duty.

Finding myself suddenly overtaken by fatigue, I sat up in bed to prevent myself from falling asleep. It would soon be time to act. In the adjoining room



TWO BOLSHEVIK AGENTS, ONE A BOY OF 14, ON THEIR WAY TO BE SHOT BY THE GERMANS

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a clock droned out twelve strokes, then all was silent again. I rose noiselessly and went to the door. The key was on the inside. I turned it gently and then opened the door without a sound. Then I slipped back the safety catch of my revolver. In the corridor, too, everything was still. Only the wind in the trees was to be heard.

Across the road, barely fifty paces from where I stood, Felix and Petrovski awaited my signal. I could have flashed it now through one of the tiny barred windows. There was the 95 per cent. certainty that the secret telephone lay below in the vaults. And it was not usual in a country mansion to instal the telephone in a cellar.

I could, as I have said, have given the signal quite easily now. But I cogitated the matter. No, it was still too early. I must first see whether I could not learn something more. So with my fingers touching the wall I crept forward foot by foot. The last door in front of the hall was not quite closed, and through the gap a narrow beam of light streamed into the corridor. Noiseless as a cat, I edged my way nearer and was just in time to hear the Count say :

“ I don't know, but this stranger doesn't please me. It's true he speaks Russian fluently and knows all about affairs in St. Petersburg, yet I could almost swear that three weeks ago I saw him at the ' Bristol ' in Warsaw, dressed as a German officer.”

“ But that would mean death to us, Vitya,” the Countess answered. “ I will go at once to see

whether he is asleep. If he drank that wine he ought to be sleeping soundly enough," and with these words she moved towards the door. I sprang round the corner into the hall, then listened with both ears. But all I heard were the footsteps of the Countess in the distance.

* * * * *

When making my spring I had knocked against a small table, but in the excitement of the moment I did not notice what nearly proved to be my doom. The Count had heard the noise. . . .

Very quietly I crept through the hall, my hands outstretched. It was pitch dark. Then I touched the curtain behind which the Countess had lately stood while she watched me. I drew this back and stepped behind it. Then, very cautiously, I switched on my pocket torch. I stood in a very narrow alcove, little more than a niche, which in former times had probably contained a statue. On the floor lay a small but heavy Persian rug. I lifted it up and found what I had expected : a wooden trap door.

But in my excitement I had failed to hear the Count creeping after me, and I did not know that he was now standing behind the curtain. I drew back the bolt and raised the door of the trap. A steep spiral staircase led down to the vaults. With my torch alight and feeling every inch of my way, I began to descend the stairs. Then, with a fearful crash, the trap door was slammed down above me and the bolt shot home.

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I heard only the loud and mocking laughter of the Count. . . .

* * * * *

I was in a trap, but still determined to sell my life as dearly as might be. Flashing my torch on the door above, I saw it had a bolt on the inside as well. This I shot home too, before the Count had time to remember it.

Then I continued down the steep stairs. I found myself in a large vault, which in olden days may have served as a refuge or a granary. One corner was very neatly fitted up. It was furnished with a table telephone and two heavy club chairs. Various papers lay on the table. There was no window, but in the left-hand wall I noticed a door fastened with an old-fashioned lock.

I quickly took my bearings. This door must lead to a room which faced the roadway. If I could contrive to open the door with a pick-lock, and if the adjoining room had a window looking out on the road, then I was saved.

At this moment a loud voice sounded in the vault, echoing strangely through the place. I started involuntarily. Surely there was no one in the vault except myself. Then I listened again. The voice came through a speaking-tube that was fitted in the corner. I went up to it and heard the jeering tones of the Count.

“Well, my German colleague, so you walked into the trap ! And so clumsily ! Did you really think

us so stupid? Naturally, we were prudent enough to provide ourselves with a second telephone. As you will never leave this cellar alive I will even satisfy your curiosity. The second telephone is fitted in the little chapel in the park. In four weeks' time I'll come down to the vault and bury your corpse in the forest."

At these words my blood ran cold. If Felix and Petrovski forced their way in at the end of twenty-four hours, would they find me in the cellar? If the Count had replaced the thick rug over the trap door I should not be able to hear what was going on above, and in that case I would really be lost. . . .

Taking the skeleton key from my pocket, I began working on the lock. The Count, of course, could not know that I carried such an implement on me. So simple was the ancient lock that I had it open in a few minutes. The door, of massive oak, groaned on its rusty hinges. At this moment, I knew, my life hung by a thread. If the room had no window facing the road my opening of the door would be wasted effort, and a miserable death by starvation would be my certain fate. On the threshold I all but tripped over some object that lay behind it. I flashed my torch downward and started back in horror. It was the corpse of an elderly man, already in an advanced state of decomposition, the features horribly twisted.

But at the moment I had other anxieties. Did this room have a window fronting the road? I

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lighted up the wall and almost cried aloud for joy. Some five feet above me was a small window covered by a close-meshed grill. I was saved !

With my torch I gave the agreed signal in Morse, repeating it several times. Would they see it ? Outside shone the moon, and through that narrow barred window I could discern the wide gate and behind it the forest. Then I saw Felix and Petrovski emerge from the trees and run across the road. So they *had* seen my signals.

I now hastened back to the vault, climbed the staircase and waited just under the trap door. Despite the thick rug I heard shots in the hall—then all was silent. Then the stillness was shattered by one appalling scream. Knowing that my friends would not easily detect the trap door, I returned to the window and flashed more signals. Then suddenly the shutter was opened and I saw Felix before me. I explained to him where the trap door lay, and barely five minutes later I heard the bolt drawn back. I stepped out into the niche in the hall and was at once embraced by Felix and Petrovski, who wept for joy at seeing me.

Lying bound on the thick carpet lay the Count and Countess, side by side, guarded by the police dogs. The Countess's dress was badly torn. In attempting to escape she had been roughly mauled by one of the police dogs. Felix and Petrovski had brought all the lamps they could find into the hall, which was now ablaze with light.

Petrovski, with a couple of well-aimed bullets,

had disposed of the great hounds outside when they tried to keep him from the gate.

It was now my turn to laugh at the Count. He lay on his back, his face convulsed. As Felix and Petrovski had not brought sufficient rope, only the legs of the two prisoners were bound. The Count had thrown away his revolver, and although their hands were free they seemed helpless with their feet tied.

"The tables have been turned!" I said to the Count. "You were going to let me die a horrible death from starvation in the vault, but now things are different. You had better understand that. But you were quite right in thinking you had seen me at the 'Bristol' in Warsaw. You were sitting, at the next table, but at that time your hair was dark, Count Oginski."

He gnashed his teeth in impotent fury.

Together with Felix I then returned to the vault, where we saw the papers on the table. So secure against detection had the Count felt himself that he had left a large number of military reports simply lying there. Part of them were in the handwriting of his wife. Both, therefore, were flagrantly guilty of espionage and more than ripe for court-martial. I caused the telephones in the vault and in the little park chapel to be destroyed.

Although repeatedly questioned by Petrovski as to who the dead man in the cellar was, the Count refused to say a word. Who could this be who had met so dreadful an end?

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We were soon to regret the shortage of rope for the prisoners' bonds. The Count must have contrived to take some poison out of his pocket and pass some of it unseen to his wife, for suddenly both were seized with spasms and foamed at the mouth. Petrovski shouted for me.

Thinking that the prisoners had perhaps broken from their bonds, Felix and I dashed into the hall. But we arrived too late. Both the captives were *in extremis*. A few last spasms, and then the end came.

Meanwhile day was dawning outside, a cold, wet autumn day. It was still raining. Near the chapel in the grounds Felix and Petrosvki buried the Count and Countess, and beside them the unknown dead man I had found in the vault.

We stayed at the mansion two days to investigate the copious material we had discovered there. It put us on the tracks of three other spies behind our front, one in Warsaw and two in Pinsk.

Pending the arrival of a guard from the nearest military post to prevent any plundering of the deserted and valuable mansion, I installed Felix as administrator. But before leaving I once more visited every room in the place, which was decorated and furnished on the most sumptuous scale. And all this in a wilderness of marshland! Generations had come and gone, and centuries had passed over this venerable mansion, forgotten by the world.

Now it lay ownerless. Count Oginski was the last of his house, and he too had gone to join his ancestors. A chill wind sighed through the park,

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driving before it the fallen leaves. Above the marshes a grey mist hovered. At the park gates a wandering monk tugged at the rusty bell, but none opened to him.

Already the grey mist was creeping over the ancient park, lying dense and heavy above the chapel and the newly turned graves. And out of this grey pall rose the spectral outlines of the old grey mansion, standing there in the illimitable marshland.

CHAPTER TEN

A DREAM

IT was some three weeks after Genia's return from Odessa that she and Felix and myself held a new conference. I had two important tasks which had to be performed without delay, and as Felix and Genia were my boldest and most trustworthy assistants I naturally turned to them first. One of my tasks was to convey a large number of carrier pigeons to my agents behind the Russian front.

There were abundant signs that the Russians were preparing to take the offensive at certain parts of the front, chiefly in the south against the Austrians. Several of their wireless stations had suspended their daily activities, which indicated that they had been dismantled for removal. For this reason the carrier pigeon had again become our principal aid, and the supply of these birds behind the enemy front had therefore to be increased as far as possible, before it was too late. Consequently, we decided that Felix, accompanied by four reliable men, should go with the pigeons on the very next evening. And, further, that on the next day but one Genia should travel to Mogileff, there to mix with the Russian officers and learn what she could of the

impending offensive. The next evening, therefore, I escorted Felix, his friends, and the pigeons to the front, and on the following day I also saw Genia off on her mission.

I was surprised to notice that Genia, contrary to her usual demeanour, was this time depressed and timorous. "What's the matter, Genia Josifovna?" I asked her. "Why are you so sad?"

"Oh, I expect it's all nonsense," she replied, "and one mustn't be superstitious."

"But do tell me. It will relieve your mind."

"It's just silliness. Only a dream, that's all. My mother dreamed last night that she saw me in a long white garment with white roses in my hair, and when we were having tea together this morning she said: 'Do you know what that means? A white garment and white flowers mean death. Genia, dear, don't go this time. Stay at home just this once!' 'But, darling Mother,' I answered, 'first of all, dreams are nonsense; and, secondly, I have absolutely promised the Lieutenant to carry out his important mission to-night. A promise is a promise. I shall be back in ten days, and then you'll be the first to laugh at your dream.'"

"But in spite of this my Mother cried bitterly when I left. Now you'll understand why I'm sad," she added, with a brave smile.

"Now, Genia, if you are frightened or uneasy in any way, I'll send Petrovski instead, though of course he won't do it half as well as you."

"No, no!" she cried, "not under any circum-

stances. I only told you the story because you asked why I was so silent. Let us go quickly to the Colonel in his dug-out and drink some wine, so that we may be jolly once more. Or have you some wine here ? ”

“ I might have been a thought-reader, for, as it happens, I have brought wine with me, and also some chocolate to keep you from being hungry till to-morrow morning. Unfortunately, I forgot to bring a glass, so we'll have to drink out of the bottle.”

“ But, of course,” she cried, with beaming face.

It was a glorious summer night, and the entire front was as peaceful as on the last occasion. Birds twittered in the trees. A light mist was rising from the earth. We stepped aside a little. Genia hung on my arm and let herself be led like a small child. We sat down on the edge of a dried-up trench and Genia gazed dreamily into space.

“ Until now we have only talked business,” she began, after a long pause ; “ and you hardly know who I am. Shall I tell you, or will it bore you ? It will be dark for a long time yet, and we have hours to spare.”

“ Of course, Genia. You ought to know that I am deeply interested in all that concerns you. But first of all you must have another good drink, because I brought the wine specially for you. I don't care much for it ; port wine is too sweet for my taste.”

Genia then told me about her life, and suddenly, when she had finished, she began to weep.

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"What is it, then, Genia?" I asked her fearfully. "Why are you crying?" She laid her head on my shoulder and sobbed quietly.

"Will you be cross with me if I tell you a tremendous secret?" she whispered; "a secret I have never told anybody, not even my mother."

"Tell me, Genia."

"You won't despise me or think me a bad woman?"

"No, no, Genia. I promise you that," I reassured her.

Then she put her arms round me and laid her pretty head on my breast.

"It's the first time in my life that I, whom you always call 'the proud Genia,' have wept about a man and felt humiliated. And it's such a hopeless love. . . . Has it never occurred to you that you are something more to me than my chief? That I would go through fire for you, Sascha,* because I love you more than anything in all the world? Oh! you will despise me because I am already engaged to Felix! But I can't help it that I love you. I have often wanted to tell you, especially the last time you brought me through the trenches. Tell me now, do you despise me?"

"Silly little Genia, how can you imagine such nonsense? I did have an idea of it, but I wouldn't take any notice because of your engagement to Felix."

Perhaps in my confused state I chose the wrong

* Diminutive of Alexander.

A DREAM

words. On the other hand, sitting at my side was a lovable woman who in a few hours would be running a very grave risk of her life just to fulfil a promise to me. How, then, could I be hard or shatter all Genia's hopes ?

"Leave that to me," she said. "If I tell Felix that I love you he will set me free. He's an honourable man and no one knows him as well as I. Let me go on my way happily, and promise me that on my return I may speak to Felix about it. Will you promise me that ?"

"I promise, my little Genia."

Then her silvery laugh rang out again as of old.

"Well, now, everything that has been worrying me these last few weeks is over and done with, and I'm merry once more. Press my hand before I leave you."

I gripped her soft little hand, which trembled as it lay in mine.

"Never have I gone 'over there' so willingly as I do now, Sascha, and this time you shall have the best report I have ever brought back. I'll work for you and do everything you wish until the war is over. . . ."

And again she rested her head on my shoulder. But she was weeping again. The moon broke through the clouds and its beams played in the tree tops. Round about us a thick mist mantled the earth.

"What is the time, Sascha ?" she enquired.

"Half past three."

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“ Oh ! then, I must go quickly or it will be too light. How the time has flown ! Well, in ten days I'll be back at the same place. Will you be waiting for me ? Promise ! ”

“ Of course I'll be waiting, my little Genia. And may the best, the very best of luck go with you ! ”

“ And I may speak to Felix on my return ? ”

“ Certainly, I've promised you that.”

“ God bless you, Sascha ! ” she cried.

Then the mist closed about her.

“ God bless *you*, Genia,” I called after her. Then she vanished into the darkness.

Night after night I waited for her. Genia never came back. . . .

CHAPTER ELEVEN

SECRET SERVICE TRICKS

As in the case of many other branches of espionage, numerous books by uninformed writers have given the public very confused ideas about the use of invisible inks. Since these inks were among the most dangerous and difficult of the stratagems we had to combat, a brief description of them will be given.

It goes without saying that the Intelligence services, Entente no less than German, used invisible ink even before the war, and the longer the war endured the fiercer became the struggle on both sides to frustrate this dangerous weapon. A merciless campaign was waged, the combatants being not soldiers but chemists. Always the chemists were inventing new compounds—always their “opposite numbers” were discovering new methods of rendering the invisible ink visible.

In the immediate neighbourhood of the front itself secret inks played a subordinate part. Their true sphere of utility was on the routes leading to the front and more especially the hinterland—reporting new troop formations, new inventions in artillery and chemical warfare.

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An apparently harmless and strictly private letter addressed to a town in a neutral country would have a secret message written between the lines in invisible ink. The counter-espionage people could only occasionally test such letters, since it was obviously impracticable to subject to chemical reagents every letter and every newspaper addressed to neutrals.

Whenever a big offensive was about to be launched by our own side, the sending of letters by the troops concerned was banned—and rightly so. Without the men themselves being aware of it, all letters written by or addressed to them were held up until the attack had begun. This measure proved to be of extraordinary value in the course of the war. Neither the men, nor even their officers, had the slightest inkling of what terrible harm they might bring upon themselves by writing to their relatives about the preparations for the forthcoming attack. For quite innocently the relations at home would talk, until at last the enemy agent got wind of the news and promptly communicated it to his Government. The postal embargo rendered this impossible.

Secret agents on both sides transmitted in invisible ink many messages without being caught. I am not exaggerating when I say that a really skilful and experienced agent who despatched his reports by this method was practically immune from detection and had only himself to blame if he were found out.

Here is an example. The post office authorities

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in Frankfort-on-Main were surprised at the frequency with which a certain Dr. X. sent German newspapers to a Mr. D. in Switzerland. Unfortunately, their surprise came much too late. When, at length, there came a day when one of these papers was treated with various chemicals as though it were a photographic plate, writing began to appear on the margin, gradually becoming more distinct. This despicable traitor Dr. X. was a very methodical fellow who numbered each of his reports, and the authorities were horrified to find that the message they had detected was the seventy-first.

That Dr. X. was caught was his own fault for posting newspapers so often, and always from Frankfort to the same address in Switzerland. He was condemned and duly executed.

There is no question but that hundreds of reports from German and enemy agents got through undetected. In practice, as I have said before, it is impossible to test every letter and every newspaper.

Agents who had their base of operations far in the enemy interior were called "distant agents." Invisible ink was sent to these people by a particularly trustworthy messenger. I had such agents in St. Petersburg, Moscow and Kieff. They sent their reports alternately to Stockholm, Copenhagen, or Christiania (Oslo), whence they were forwarded to me by our intermediaries by way of cover addresses in Berlin.

When it was a matter of reporting new troop formations in the interior, or improvements in

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artillery or technical matters, this circuitous method was naturally useless. Reports from my agents in St. Petersburg, Moscow and Kieff took on the average eight to ten days to reach me. Their arrival was therefore timely enough. In order to keep a check on them I caused each one to be numbered. Out of more than eighty messages only two failed to arrive. As each letter was received it was placed in a chemical bath, just like a photographic plate, and after a few minutes the previously invisible writing began to appear between the lines. If an agent were sufficiently adroit he could do his work throughout the war without running any particular danger.

The most difficult part of the matter was the delivery of the ink. If one of these messengers were caught with such ink in his possession he was, of course, a doomed man. There was, too, the further danger that to save his life he might betray those to whom the ink was consigned. The messenger, therefore, had to be both a very astute and an entirely trustworthy person. That is why I chose Felix.

Not only did he know the best places at which to cross the front, but I knew for certain that if he were caught he would never dream of betraying his colleagues—as the scoundrel in the brown cloak had done. Of the gallows, on which his father had met his death, he had no dread. "One must always accept the possibility of such a fate," he often remarked to me.

SECRET SERVICE TRICKS

From what has been said above, it will be obvious that in the next war, as in the last, secret ink will be one of the most formidable weapons of espionage.

I have already stated that in this sort of work it was almost invariably his own fault if an agent were trapped. A really clever one was practically safe. When writing with invisible ink it was of the first importance to use the softest possible pen, in order to avoid indentations in the paper. A paper which showed scoring between the lines or on the margin was, of course, at once an object of suspicion. And generally the suspicion was well grounded. Such letters or newspapers were naturally placed in a photographic bath without delay.

Early in the war secret messages were sometimes written under postage stamps. There was sufficient space under three or four stamps to write something, though not enough. Only two or three times did I employ this method of communication.

Of the crude methods employed by the Russians at the beginning I will cite a few. In the Russian frontier town of Mlava there existed a peculiar Jewish sect. As the men had no special confidence in the fidelity of their wives, it was customary on the eve of a wedding to shave the head of the bride, and from that time until her death she had to wear a wig. This was done to make her less attractive to other men.

One day on my way to the front I met two soldiers who had a Jewess in custody. On my questioning them they explained that the woman

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had been arrested at the front because of her suspicious conduct in running away. The colonel of the battalion had therefore ordered her to be taken to the nearest post in the rear. When I began to address her in Russian she became confused.

"Your wig is rather disordered," I remarked ; whereupon she turned as white as chalk.

"I belong to a Jewish sect and have to wear a wig," she stammered.

I nodded. "Yes, I know that sect." And then with a single movement I snatched the wig from her head.

The woman with her shaven head stood trembling in front of us, presenting such a comical spectacle that one of the soldiers laughed so much that he dropped his rifle.

Examining the inside of the wig I found some stitches. These I cut with my penknife—and out fell a message, containing full and accurate details of the advance of our 20th Army Corps.

Not bad for a woman ! And she had been on the point of slipping through to the Russians with this very important intelligence.

Some days later a suspicious character was apprehended near the front lines and brought before me. He reeked of iodoform and claimed to be suffering from venereal disease. As he gave contradictory replies to my questions I ordered his bandages to be removed. Thereupon he began to shriek and struggle, so that we had to bind him.

When the bandage was unrolled a message fell out.

Another suspect was wearing a brand-new suit of good quality, on which a patch had been sewn. He, too, had been arrested near the front. I came on the scene just as he was about to be released after a fruitless search.

"We can find nothing on him," said the elderly officer who stood alone with the man in the road.

"Why have you got that patch on your smart new suit?" I asked the man.

"Oh, that?" he stuttered. "I tore a hole in it the day before yesterday."

"A funny place. Take that suit off at once," I ordered.

At this the fellow suddenly made a bolt for it. "Stop!" I shouted, and fired two warning shots. Soldiers rushed up and seized him.

"Why were you suspicious about that patch?" asked the elderly Major.

"You will soon see, Sir," was my answer, as I cut the stitches and a scrap of paper fell to the ground.

"Damn it, can you *smell* them out?" exclaimed the Major.

The paper was a fragment of a Russian Staff map upon which our various artillery positions were neatly marked with a cross.

Early in the war Russian agents sometimes hid their messages in watches, usually behind the inner casing. The drawback to this was that the watch

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stopped as soon as the message was inserted. I recall one such incident.

From the obvious military bearing of a suspect who had been arrested close to the front lines I judged him to be a Russian soldier in disguise. He, too, had been searched without result. By this date the watch trick had become so commonplace that as a matter of course I asked the N.C.O. who had made the search whether the man wore a watch.

"Yes, Sir. He has a watch, but it's no good. It has stopped."

"Ah ! I thought it would have stopped," said I.

"But how could you know that, Sir ?" asked the astonished N.C.O.

"Now, look here," I replied, "and be very careful. First lead the man back to cells and then get hold of his watch without his noticing anything. Then bring the watch to me. I'll wait here."

In about ten minutes the N.C.O. returned with the watch. With my pen-knife I opened the outer-casing. "Now you'll see why the watch stopped." I said, prising up the inner cover. Between this and the works lay a tiny scrap of folded paper. "There you are !"

"Well, I should never have thought of that, Sir !" ejaculated the sergeant, shaking his head in bewilderment.

These are naturally only a few of many such episodes, all of which, however, were confined to the first years of the war.

CHAPTER TWELVE

HOW GENIA DIED

FELIX duly returned from his carrier pigeon expedition, having faithfully delivered the birds to my agents on the other side.

"This time it wasn't so easy," he told me. "We ran into a Russian patrol and had to hide the pigeon baskets in a spinney. On their way back the patrol passed right by the place. What a fright I had! But luckily the pigeons didn't make a sound, and the soldiers went on unsuspecting."

While the gallant Felix was telling me all this I felt truly sorry for him, and I made up my mind that when Genia got back I would plead with her not to break with him.

On the tenth day, as we had agreed, I waited for Genia at the place whence she had vanished that foggy night. Hour after hour went by, but Genia did not come. At daybreak I returned to Staff headquarters. For five days on end I waited in this way. On the sixth day I spoke to Felix.

"I'm pretty certain now that something has happened to Genia," he said, in deep dejection. "I fear the worst, Lieutenant. Without a doubt she's dead. Otherwise she would be here."

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I tried to contradict this, but he did not hear me.

"I have worked for you faithfully," he went on, "and, I believe, with success. Just now things are quiet at the front and you can spare me for a fortnight. So please give me two weeks' leave, so that I may find out what has happened to Genia."

"Of course, Felix," I cried. "We must hope for the best. It may be that Genia is only held up somewhere."

But Felix shook his head.

"Do you know what I feel? Genia is long since dead!"

* * * * *

Felix returned after three weeks. His hair hung unkempt on his forehead, his hands shook.

"They have hanged Genia," he murmured hoarsely.

I sprang to my feet. "Hanged?" I exclaimed in horror, breaking into a cold sweat. He could hardly speak; he only nodded in assent. "Dreadful!" I muttered. "Our little Genia. Tell me, Felix."

With his head in his hands Felix sobbed like a child.

"Of course," he began heavily; "you know there was a man who wanted Genia and was repulsed by her, and that this fellow swore to have his revenge. . . . I went to Mogileff and there I heard from a Jew who keeps a café that a very pretty German spy had been hanged about two weeks before. When I pressed a hundred roubles

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into his palm he promised to introduce me next day in his café to a man who knew all about the affair.

“ This man was an elderly person who acted as clerk to the local court-martial. After his detailed description it was quite certain that the woman was Genia. This is what he told me :

“ “ The proceedings at the court-martial had lasted several hours. At first it was thought that she would not be condemned to death. Her youth and beauty did not fail to make an impression. Only when the prosecutor described her as one of the most dangerous of all German spies did the sentiment of the court gradually change. I was present at the trial as senior clerk and was amazed at the admirable coolness with which Genia Josifovna sat on the prisoner’s bench. She gave no sign of emotion. It seemed to me almost as if she were courting death. Certainly, at the moment when the president pronounced sentence of death by the rope I was more upset than the girl was.

“ “ “ Do you wish to appeal for mercy to the higher command ? ” asked the president. “ The death sentence may possibly be changed to one of life-long exile to Siberia ? ” “ To Siberia for life ? ” cried the prisoner. “ No, I do not want such mercy ! ”

“ “ Next morning, almost before it had dawned, she was hanged. I felt it so badly that I reported myself sick, for otherwise it would have been my duty to attend the execution. My colleague told me afterwards that even the not very sensitive hangman

was touched when he saw the young and fair victim. He was merciful in that, as he was adjusting the noose, he broke her neck by a sudden pressure of his knuckles and thus saved her from the slow agony of death by strangulation. He told this later to an officer of gendarmes, who passed it on to me !’

“ Well,” sobbed Felix, “ now you know how it was, Lieutenant. So died our little Genia ! ”

“ So died our little Genia,” I repeated ; for I could not conceive of that dear, sweet and merry girl lying somewhere at this very moment in a nameless grave like a common criminal. I gazed at Felix’s pale face, in which sparkled two feverish eyes. “ But you haven’t told me everything, Felix ! ”

“ No, Lieutenant, I have not told you all. There is a second part to my report : how I discovered the traitor and what vengeance I took upon him. Would a murder committed behind the Russian front, the victim being the betrayer of a German woman agent, be punishable here, Lieutenant ? ”

“ No. Definitely not. If you have dealt with this traitor he fully deserved his fate.”

Felix wiped the tears from his eyes.

“ I wish he had had a thousand lives—I would have taken them all ! . . . One day after the court-martial official had told me his story I spoke privately with the old Jew and opened my heart to him. I told him that Genia was my fiancée and why the fellow had denounced her. Knowing the Jew to be a fanatical hater of the Russians, I could safely be frank with him.



RUSSIAN SPIES SHOT BY AUSTRIANS



“ ‘ God of the just ! ’ he said. ‘ May both my eyes become blind and leprosy consume me if I betray you to these Russian dogs ! ’

“ ‘ Will you, then, do me a great favour ? ’

“ ‘ I’ll do anything for you, gentleman.’

“ ‘ Then help me to find this scoundrel. It won’t bring any harm to you ? ’

“ ‘ That may not be so difficult,’ answered the Jew ; ‘ for the old official you spoke to yesterday is clerk to the court-martial and will know the name of the traitor. If I’m not mistaken, he’s even told me that the man is a Russian secret agent. The old official is Polish, and hates the Russians as I do. I can tell him the plain truth, and when he hears that you were the fiancé of the poor little girl for whom he grieved he will certainly help you.’

“ The old Jew had not promised too much. When I returned to him on the following evening he whispered in my ear a name. ‘ He’s called Budsinski, is it not so ? ’ Eugeni Budsinski ! I started, for this was the very man whose advances Genia had repelled. . . .

“ ‘ He’s here in Mogileff now,’ said the old Jew, ‘ and he lives at a low pot-house on the other bank of the Dnieper. For betraying the girl he received a special reward of 200 roubles, and at present he spends most of the day in the tavern, drunk all the time. In the back room, of course, seeing that alcohol is strictly forbidden.’

“ Now came the most difficult and dangerous part of my plan. To shoot the scoundrel from behind

would have been easy enough. But that was far too speedy and pleasant a death. I went, therefore, to Lida, where I have two friends who were at school with me. When I told them about the dreadful fate of my little Genia they were both ready to help me. So we all three returned to Mogileff the same day.

"I dared not visit the tavern myself, for if the fellow recognised me he would, of course, at once deliver me up to the gallows. Lest he should recognise me in the street I got a friend of the old Jew's, a former theatrical hairdresser, to fit me up with such a convincing moustache and beard that even a sharp detective would not have known me by daylight.

"We made our final preparations. It was a dark, rainy night, and very few people were abroad in the streets. We crossed the bridge to the further bank of the Dnieper. Two sentries stood on the bridge, but they let us pass unchallenged. It proved to be a long way to the tavern, which was one of the last houses of the town. Actually it lay beyond the town and adjoined a large field which led to a wood.

"To one of my companions I gave the little secret pass which we took from that villain in the brown cloak and which you handed over to me in case I was ever held up by a Russian sentry. It was with this pass that my friend was to lure Budsinski into the trap.

"And the plan worked. With a hand-cart and a coil of rope I waited behind a bush in the field,

HOW GENIA DIED

while my friends entered the tavern. Budsinski was, as usual, already pretty far gone in liquor. When I think of it now, it was a devilishly risky business. If the scoundrel had felt the slightest suspicion my two friends would have been lost men. In the fullest sense of the phrase they staked their lives on a card. But all went well. After they had drunk a few cups of coffee in the front room and eaten a snack, one of them showed the landlord the little pass and asked for Budsinski. With uncertain steps and breathing a cloud of alcohol as he came, Budsinski emerged from the back room, from which women's voices could be heard.

"My friend stepped up to Budsinski and showed him the pass. 'All right, all right, I see. What is it?' 'I've just come from the Staff, from Colonel Efimov,' said my friend. 'Both of us have to leave to-morrow, and I am to tell you what it's about. I won't say anything more here. I hear women's voices yonder and there are people sitting in this room. Come out into the road. I won't detain you more than five minutes at most. And here is a colleague of ours,' he added, introducing his companion.

" 'Oh! well, then I'd better step outside,' grumbled Budsinski, and unsuspectingly followed my two friends.

"Far and wide not a soul was in sight. Before the villain could utter a cry one of my friends thrust a gag in his mouth while the other bound his hands behind his back. Then we wound him about with

rope from head to foot and laid him in the hand-cart. Silently we pushed the cart across the field to the fringe of the wood. There we stopped and set the fettered scoundrel upon his feet.

“ ‘ I am Felix Wolski, the fiancé of Genia, whom you sent to the gallows.’ As I spoke I flashed my torch in his face ; it was distorted with fear and ghastly pale.

“ ‘ You walked into the trap and are now in my power, Eugeni Budsinski. You once threatened Genia and said “ an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth,” and now you have carried out your threat. But this is the hour of *my* vengeance. I cannot bring Genia Josifovna back to life, but you shall die a still more awful death ! ’

“ I am not a hard-hearted man, Lieutenant, but I must confess that I gloated over the absolute terror which was stamped on my rival’s features. ‘ I know of no torture too horrible for this beast in human form,’ I said to my friends in a loud and clear voice. ‘ Bullet and rope are much too merciful—we’ll bury the dog alive ! ’ At these words the villain fell on his knees and whimpered, so far as the gag in his mouth would permit. We left him on his knees, took spades from the cart, and began to dig before his very eyes. It took us about half an hour to excavate the strange grave, and in that half-hour I enjoyed the full savour of my revenge. The villain’s whining was balm to my wounded soul. Our little Genia will be pleased with me !

“ The half hour was now up. We seized Bud-

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sinski and hurled him into the grave. He rolled from side to side, moaning continually.

“Very slowly, spadeful by spadeful, we threw the damp soil into the grave. He tried to raise himself to his knees, but always we thrust him back with our spades. Then it was finished. We tramped the grave down and covered it over with turf. I lighted up the place with my torch ; nothing was to be seen except a small low mound which looked quite natural. That is how I avenged Genia Josifovna, Lieutenant.”

Never after that did I see Felix laugh. . . .

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

THE MAN WHO BRIBED GENERAL SCHULMANN

THE extreme difficulty of not only getting into personal communication with one of the enemy's high military commanders, but, still more, of seducing him from his allegiance, forms the subject of this chapter.

In view of the general situation, it was of vital importance for us to get possession of the fortress of Ossowiecz as quickly as possible. Hitherto all attempts to storm this citadel, standing as it did in marshy and barely accessible country, had failed.

Then, one day, I heard that the commandant of the fortress, Lieut.-General Schulmann, was not incorruptible. The source from which I learned this was reliable. The news came from an acquaintance of the general's who had an intimate knowledge of his personality and his private life. Our assumption that the general could be bought was the crux of the whole affair. But now came the most difficult part. How and in what way to get into touch with him and make the offer? I pondered the matter a whole day before coming to the conclusion that it could only be done by word of mouth. Then I

mentally ran through the list of my agents who might be suitable for the purpose.

Contrary to the romantic spy novels, in which everything goes smoothly, the reality is very different. In any large city a stranger excites no particular attention. But in this case the conditions were quite otherwise. Ossowiecz was purely a garrison town, populated almost exclusively by soldiers and officials. Almost all of the few civilians were shop folk. In Ossowiecz any stranger would be conspicuous.

Yet because the matter was, from the military point of view, extremely important to us, I could not give up the idea. The few agents of mine who were particularly daring all refused the mission, as I had half expected. One of the boldest of them all said to me :

“ I have done the most difficult jobs, but this one I must decline. Even if it be true that the Russian general can be bribed, how could I approach him and speak to him privately ? The thing is quite impossible. One might as well go and stand under the gallows.”

I fully understood this line of reasoning. Interviews I had with the other agents concerned all led to the same result.

Quite by accident I came some days later to talk with another man on the subject. He was a German who spoke Russian fluently and had often visited Russia. His position and his family connections were such as to give me implicit confidence in him.

After a brief interview he declared his readiness

to undertake the mission. Needless to say, I told him quite candidly that he would be running an almost unparalleled risk and that the odds against success were ten to one.

"A ten per cent. chance is good enough for me," said R., with the utmost coolness.

The matter was now ripe for submission to the competent authorities, who in this case, owing to the large sum of money involved, had to be approached by others than myself. The question at issue was the terms of the agreement and the amount of the bribe.

Unofficially I had been authorised by telephone to go ahead ; there remained now only the money question. I suggested a sum of 200,000 roubles (£20,000) in return for the surrender of the fortress. Compared with the cost of the artillery munitions that were fired away in the following months, this was quite a modest sum, while the military advantages of the surrender would have been incalculable.

Nevertheless, the deciding authority, with true Prussian parsimony, only authorised half this sum, viz. : £10,000.

Meanwhile I had worked out the plan to the last detail, as follows :—

First of all, R. had to get through the front. As in this swampy sector there were a number of secret paths which my agents had often used before, no particular difficulty need be feared here. I intended to conduct R. personally to the starting-point.

Passing to the north of Ossowiecz, R. must then

approach the fortress from the east, since our lines lay to the west of it. But now as I sat smoking before a samovar I racked my brains to think of a pretext under which R. could approach the general in command.

"It's no use worrying our heads over that now," said R. ; "you leave all that to me. Once in Ossowiecz I'll certainly hit upon an excuse." So this, the most ticklish problem of all, was summarily shelved.

"Well, now, coming to the business in hand," I resumed ; "you will have to think out some pretext for speaking to the general privately. Then say to him that you come from me and make him an offer to surrender the fortress for the sum of £10,000."

I further proposed the following plan : if the general signified his agreement the Ossowiecz wireless station was to transmit three times in succession "da, da, da" (yes, yes, yes). That would naturally have to be done in some skilful and unobtrusive way, for it would never do for the wireless operator to guess what it all meant.

The morning after receiving this signal we would begin a bombardment at 5 a.m. All the forts and the town itself would be shelled. When the bombardment opened the general in command would call together his responsible officers and tell them something like this :

"I have received reliable information that the Germans have obtained large reinforcements and

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will try to break through both from the north and the south of Ossowiecz. The bombardment confirms this intelligence. In view of our inferior numbers, and to avoid the encirclement and capture of the entire garrison, I propose to evacuate the fortress and to retreat."

As for General Schulmann himself, he would be advised to secrete himself somewhere in Ossowiecz when the Russian garrison withdrew, and to report to German H.Q. when our troops marched in. He would then be handed a cheque for £10,000 and would be allowed to remain in Germany.

For over three hours we discussed the plan. Meanwhile dusk had fallen. I walked with R. through the streets of Lotzen, that tiny East Prussian fortress whose commandant, Colonel Busse, when challenged to surrender by the Russians, who had ten times his number of men, had replied to General Samsonoff's envoys :

"Tell your general that a Prussian officer never surrenders a fortress, even when the odds are ten to one !"

That had happened six months before.

On parting from R. I said to him : "My chief anxiety is, how are you to get in touch with the commandant ?"

"If that's your chief trouble you may sleep quietly," R. replied. "I shall manage it all right. How it is to be done is my affair."

And so, with a firm handclasp, we parted. I gazed after R. as he went. A fine fellow ! Unfit

for active service, this was his way of serving the Fatherland.

* * * * *

Next day as dusk approached we drove to the front. I told the chauffeur to stop when we came to the woods, to avoid drawing the attention of the Russians. Meanwhile it had become dark. In contrast to the previous night it was cloudy and black as pitch. At the front everything was quiet ; not a single shot was heard while we were there.

"There are no Russian patrols about to-day," said the sentry in the advanced post to which we came. After a brief talk I bade R. farewell. He lighted a cigarette, whistled a merry tune, and exchanged jokes with the sentry.

So dark was it that the narrow track through the marshes was barely visible.

R. disappeared into the night.

* * * * *

Our army wireless station had orders to listen very attentively to the Ossowiecz messages. Three days had passed when the officer in charge of the station, to whom I had confidentially explained the matter, called me up : "The Russians have just signalled 'Da' three times," he told me.

When I reported this Russian signal to the General Staff Officer of our army he was at first incredulous. "*Donnerwetter!*" he exclaimed. "I call that really smart. It sounds almost like a Sherlock Holmes' novel. Your man must have nerves

like iron to have got through to the general in command ! ”

In accordance with our plan, the artillery was ordered to open fire on the fortress of Ossowiecz at 5 o'clock on the following morning. After a heavy bombardment lasting three hours our fire gradually slackened. But while on the previous day the Russian guns had hardly spoken at all, they now replied to the German fire with great intensity.

Instructions were telephoned to the front that if Russian envoys appeared, H.Q. were to be informed at once. I myself had gone to the front, and from an artillery observation post studied the fortress through my glasses for hours on end, hoping to see the white flag hoisted. But nothing stirred.

When next morning the Russian artillery opened a particularly violent fire and their patrols were seen to be unusually active, I could no longer doubt that something had happened and that the plan had miscarried.

A month later I heard the details of this drama on a now forgotten front.

During an advance in the zone south-west of Ossowiecz we took some prisoners from the Third Caucasian Corps, among them three officers. For weeks I had been worrying over the frustrated plan, so inexplicable and puzzling did it appear to be.

As it was possible that the captured officers could shed some light on the business, I had them brought to Lyck. An ordinary interrogation did not interest me, for they could tell me nothing new. We knew

the Russian dispositions in and about Ossowiecz down to the minutest detail.

Very adroitly I brought the conversation round to Ossowiecz, alluding to the heavy artillery fire we had received from the fortress a month ago.

"Were you going to attack?" I asked casually. As I spoke, Staff Captain Nasaroff laughed, and then related to me the tragedy of my agent, R.

"No, it was something quite different," he began. "As a matter of fact, the Germans had sent a spy who bribed our General. It was quite an incredible affair. The commandant had actually agreed to surrender the fortress. After the heavy bombardment by the Germans he called a council of war and said that in view of the marked superiority of the Germans he had decided to give up the fortress to avoid being cut off. After some slight protest his staff agreed.

"When General Irmanoff, who commands our corps, heard of this, he at once drove into Ossowiecz.

"Being senior in rank to the fortress commandant he said to the latter: 'As long as I remain with my corps to the south of Ossowiecz the fortress will not be evacuated. If you want to surrender personally, there's nothing to prevent you. Perhaps it would be as well if you did, for we have no use for such officers as you. For the rest, I shall at once call up G.H.Q. and get *their* decision.'

"This General Irmanoff at once did, speaking directly to the Grand Duke Nicholas' chief of staff.

SPIES BREAK THROUGH

“What General Irmanoff actually said we never heard, but that same evening the fortress commandant was removed from his post.

“No one knows what has happened to him. Some say he was immediately court-martialled, condemned to death and hanged. Others will have it that after his arrest for treachery he shot himself.

“The German agent was shot. He admitted to being a German soldier, but refused to say anything further. At first he was going to be hanged, as is the custom with us. But as he was a soldier, and the court-martial took into account his unheard-of courage in penetrating to the presence of the fortress commandant, the sentence was so far modified that shooting was substituted for the rope.”

Now at last I knew why I had never heard again from poor R. He had paid with his life for this daring soldier's deed, which had all but succeeded. What the Russian staff captain told me afforded the best proof that R. made his offer to the fortress commandant by word of mouth.

When, some months later, we took the fortress of Ossowiecz in the course of the great Mackensen offensive, I tried to locate the grave of this anonymous German hero. But no one could tell me where he had been buried.

This episode must have been absolutely unique in the Great War. No one ever paralleled the achievement of poor R., and the attempt would certainly have succeeded but for the eleventh-hour intervention of General Irmanoff.

THE MAN WHO BRIBED GENERAL SCHULMANN

I have related the affair in order to show that it is virtually impossible to corrupt an officer holding high command on the enemy's side. Stories to the contrary are mere fairy tales. Thanks to the immediate acceptance of the bribe by the fortress commandant, the Ossowiecz affair was comparatively a simple one, in so far as any such undertaking can be simple. And even then the attempt miscarried.

Whenever the Russian G.H.Q. blundered it was apt to throw the blame on alleged German agents and traitors. This was the origin of the legends about the "treachery" of General von Rennenkampf and the commandant of Kovno, General Grigorieff.

These stories contained not a word of truth. The solitary case during the whole war in which we managed to establish contact with a high military officer in the enemy's camp was that which I have recounted here.

CHAPTER FOURTEEN

THE BRUSILOFF OFFENSIVE : IN THE CASEMATES OF BREST-LITOVSK

THE Brusiloff offensive against the Austrian army in Galicia in the summer of 1916, that reckless and inhuman slaughter of Russian troops by an irresponsible leader, was Russia's first and only victory in the Great War. In this connection one often hears, even to-day, that the Austrian army was "taken by surprise"; in other words, that in this case our Intelligence service failed, since it did not give timely warning of the Russian intentions to the high command. Such stories are pure inventions. Weeks before the offensive, Russian troop movements and the intention to attack in Galicia were reported by the Intelligence service. General Brusiloff's success was due to another cause, to which I shall revert later.

The regrouping of Russian divisions for the offensive against Austria began several weeks ahead, and was due to the urgent request of the Entente that the Russian army should pass from the defensive to the attack, in order to relieve the hard-pressed Anglo-French front. But public opinion in Russia was also demanding greater activity, for hitherto the Russian army had suffered only defeats.

THE BRUSILOFF OFFENSIVE

Discontent in Russia was spreading, and my distant agents in St. Petersburg, Moscow and Kieff reported to me the pessimistic views on the general situation which prevailed there.

Some four weeks previous to the Brussiloff offensive my agent in St. Petersburg wrote :

"I have heard confidentially from General B., with whom I am friendly, that the offensive against the Austrian armies has now been definitely decided upon and approved by the Tsar. General Brussiloff gets the supreme command." Some days later reports to the same effect came in from my agents in the back areas of the Russian front.

"Officers speak quite openly of the offensive that is soon to begin against the Austrians in Galicia," was the theme of these reports. And fresh details came in daily.

One army corps after another was gradually and cautiously withdrawn from the German front, the news being promptly forwarded by our agents and reaching us a few days later. I sent my entire outfit of carrier pigeons to the other side. Day and night Felix and my best agents were on the road, and every day the brave pigeons flew in with important messages. The enemy's wireless also helped.

"I am breaking off"—that meant, "I am dismantling"—was the signal flashed by different corps radio stations, and whenever a station broke off it signified a removal of the army corps concerned. Moreover, there were the deserters, mainly Jews. They told us that their units had been with-

SPIES BREAK THROUGH

drawn in order to take part in a big offensive against the Austrians in Galicia, and that they had accordingly preferred to surrender and await the end of the war in a German prison camp. Every night I had placards exposed in front of the Russian trenches, offering a bonus to deserters. The effect was marvellous ; day by day the number of deserters increased, and the reports they gave were very important and detailed.

In these days the work of the Intelligence Officers grew enormously. If we were able to snatch four or five hours for sleep we considered ourselves lucky. Carrier pigeons were coming in ; wireless intercepts had to be decoded, aviation reports had to be compared with those from our agents and, again, with the news derived from the wireless. Deserters from the most diverse sectors of the front—some from extraordinarily remote zones—had to be interrogated.

It was about one week before the Russian offensive began that I was called up by our G.S.O.I., Lieut.-Colonel Hoffmann. I was to come to him at once with my map, to compare the present grouping of Russian troops on our front with that on the Austrian front. In due course I spread my map alongside Colonel Hoffmann's, and then we scrutinised the entire front from the Baltic to the Carpathians. Not a single Russian army corps was missing. "We must, of course, withdraw every unit we can spare," observed Colonel Hoffmann, and then I had, as Intelligence Officer, to report to



EFFECTS OF GERMAN PROPAGANDA. RUSSIAN TROOPS SURRENDERING

THE BRUSILOFF OFFENSIVE

him on the combatant strength of every single Russian division.

In almost every case our views coincided, Colonel Hoffmann being one of the best, perhaps the very best, judges of the Russian army among all our officers of the General Staff. In something like an hour and a half we had finished ; then Colonel Hoffmann visited Field-Marshal von Hindenburg and Lieut.-General Ludendorff to report the Russian dispositions along the German and Austrian fronts and to discuss the further withdrawal of German troops for transport to Galicia. Half an hour later Colonel Hoffmann returned with the Field-Marshal and General Ludendorff, and once more I had to expound the Russian dispositions.

The Field-Marshal, in his usual amiable manner, shook hands with me as a mark of his appreciation. " Well," he said, " our front is getting pretty thin. We are giving up absolutely every man we can spare. But we must stop at a ratio of one to three. We have held our own under even worse conditions, and we must go on doing it ! "

When I read out to the Field-Marshal the deciphered Russian wireless intercepts which told of the closing down of their radio stations and, consequently, the transfer of the army corps concerned, he smiled. " It's nice of the Russkis to give us such a friendly farewell ! "

General Brussiloff's offensive was in no sense a masterpiece of generalship, such as, for example, the Battle of Tannenberg or the winter battles round the

~~TOP SECRET TROUTH~~

DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE, BUREAU OF
 ECONOMIC RESEARCH, WASHINGTON, D. C.
 OFFICE OF THE CHIEF OF BUREAU
 DIVISION OF RESEARCH AND ANALYSIS
 DIVISION OF RESEARCH AND ANALYSIS
 DIVISION OF RESEARCH AND ANALYSIS

... I saw I ...
... more than ...
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... I KNOW THE ...
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THE BRUSILOFF OFFENSIVE

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Masurian lakes, but a frontal attack in overwhelming force. Yet, despite the enemy's superior numbers, his offensive would probably have broken down but for the collapse of the Tenth Austrian Army Corps, which was composed almost entirely of Czecho-Slovaks. In part, this corps put up no resistance at all, in part it deserted to the Russians *en masse*. So a gap was opened through which the Russians drove. Brussiloff owed his victory not to military science, but to the wholesale sacrifice of Russian lives, and, above all, to the treacherous behaviour of the Czecho-Slovaks.

The desertion of these troops and the resulting Russian penetration of the Austrian front rendered the situation in Galicia extraordinarily grave. To establish unity of command on the menaced front Field-Marshal Hindenburg's jurisdiction was extended to include the left wing of the Austrian Army. As Kovno, hitherto the seat of G.H.Q., lay almost immediately behind the left wing of the upper Eastern front, a removal became necessary.

We therefore travelled by special train to Brest-Litovsk. In the town itself there was no accommodation even for our small Staff, for in the summer of 1915 Brest-Litovsk had been burned to the ground by the retreating Russians, and was now a mass of ruins. So we had to live in the train. Our railway coaches lay in a siding. The sun beat mercilessly on the coach roofs and only at night did it become somewhat cooler. My office consisted of one-half of a

sleeping compartment, and I had to do my work at a folding table at the window.

The huge Staff map of the front, from the Baltic to the Carpathians, was fastened to the wall with drawing-pins. Such, in reality, was the "pomp and circumstance" of G.H.Q., Eastern front. But worse was to come. After the trenchant measures taken by Field-Marshal von Hindenburg had brought the Brussiloff offensive to a standstill and the situation became more secure, we had to look about for other accommodation, since it was impossible to work indefinitely in these cramped quarters.

As I have said, the town of Brest-Litovsk was a heap of ruins, but the citadel embrasures remained standing. They reminded me of the notorious dungeons of the fortress of St. Peter and St. Paul in St. Petersburg, where the Nihilist bomb-throwers were incarcerated. As no other quarters could be found near or far, we had to take up our abode in the casemates, and even there the space was not much greater than it had been in the railway train.

I shared a cell with another officer of my rank. Each of the staff officers and seniors had a cell to himself. The walls were built of massive granite blocks. Many a rat I slew with my boot-jack, but always other ones came. Besides two benches, the room contained only a table and a very primitive washing place.

After the success of the Brussiloff offensive, Rumania—which Bismarck said was not a nation but a "firm"—prepared to join in the war against

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the Central Powers. Our agents warned us that a declaration of war might be expected any day. We, of course, took counter-measures. An army under the command of Field-Marshal von Mackensen stood ready to invade Rumania at once if she declared war.

The success of Brussiloff's attack, coupled with the difficult situation on the Western front and the impending entry of Rumania on the side of the Entente, led the Kaiser to decide upon a change in the supreme command. General von Falkenhayn retired. Field-Marshal von Hindenburg was appointed Chief of the Army General Staff, and General Ludendorff became Quartermaster-General.

On the Eastern front Field-Marshal Prinz Leopold of Bavaria assumed the command-in-chief. Colonel Hoffmann, hitherto G.S.O.I., was appointed his chief of staff. Von Hindenburg and Ludendorff went to Pless, where the Kaiser and G.H.Q. took up quarters in the winter of 1916-7. After having worked together for two years in good times and in bad, we felt the parting severely. Not until the spring of 1918 at Spa, during the March offensive in the West, did I see Field-Marshal von Hindenburg again.

CHAPTER FIFTEEN

A RUSSIAN SOLDIERS' COUNCIL PAYS US A VISIT

ONLY for a brief period was public opinion in Russia pacified by the success of the Brussiloff offensive. The decadent Tsarist system was cracking ever more loudly at every joint. Two parties, though mortal enemies in their respective aims, were working hand in hand to bring about the downfall of the existing *régime*.

On one side stood the bourgeois-republican party, led by the Cadets (Democrats). These people were the hirelings and supporters of the Entente. Their object was to overthrow the "war-weary" Nicholas II. and his supposedly pro-German Empress and replace them by a Government which, disregarding Russia's real interests, would wage a war of annihilation against the Central Powers. On the other side stood the Bolsheviks, who accurately gauged the popular sentiment and urged the speediest possible ending of the war. Having regard to the universal war-weariness among the people, it was clear that final victory would rest with the Bolshevik group.

On December 18, 1916, my St. Petersburg agent wrote me as follows :

"Rasputin was murdered the day before yester-

day. That was the first signal for the palace revolution. The British and the French, working together with the Democrats and the Monarchists of the extreme right, will very soon overthrow the Tsar and proclaim war to the knife against the Central Powers. Is not this madness when the people are crying for peace more loudly than ever? Is it not a shameless betrayal of the Russian nation to foreign interests? These British and French understrappers are preparing the ground for Bolshevism. The spirit of the masses is becoming more and more radical."

While two sides were thus preparing for the revolution, a reorganisation of the Russian army had been set on foot behind the front. But for the revolution that broke out in Russia in March, 1917, our situation in the East would without doubt have become extremely serious in the summer of that year.

Those who thought that they would be doing the Entente a great service by getting rid of Nicholas II. made a terrible miscalculation. They did, however, render an enormous service to us, in that they completely misinterpreted public feeling, and instead of increasing the efficiency of the army merely laid it open to Bolshevik propaganda.

By February, 1917, it was certain that a Russian revolution was only a matter of weeks. We therefore awaited it impatiently as a relief to our Eastern front. In contrast to the second, that is to say the Bolshevik, revolution, we gave no support to pre-

parations for the first one. This was, in fact, a typical revolution "from the top," with which our Intelligence service had no connection. At the same time, we kept ourselves fully informed as to the trend of events in Russia.

When, therefore, we intercepted the radio message from the general commanding at Helsingfors, asking what attitude he was to adopt towards the new developments at St. Petersburg, we knew that the hour of the Russian revolution had struck. At this time I was acting as Intelligence Officer to the Austrian Third Army in the Carpathians. Soon after the Helsingfors radio intercept had been decoded, Colonel Hoffmann called me up for a conference by means of the long-distance tape machine.

"In my view it is evident from the radio message that the revolution has broken out in St. Petersburg. What is your opinion?"

"Taken in conjunction with the reports from my agents, I don't think there is the least doubt about it, Sir," I replied.

And so it was.

Now began a perfect deluge of radio intercepts. One general after another proclaimed allegiance to the new Government, foremost among them being Brussiloff and Russki, commander-in-chief, respectively, on the north and the south-west fronts. Even the Grand Dukes vied with one another in their new-found zeal for "liberalism." One and all deserted the Tsar. Characteristic of the prevailing

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disloyalty was the fact that only here and there did a high officer remain faithful to the Throne, and these few men were, without exception, of non-Russian origin. Among them were the commanding officer of the Third Cavalry Corps, Count Keller, and the C.O. of the Guard Cavalry Corps, the Khan Hussein-Nachishevanski. Deserted by almost everyone, Nicholas II. wrote in his diary on the day of his abdication these bitter words.

"I am surrounded by betrayal, cowardice, and treachery. . . ."

* * * * *

Easter Sunday, 1917, some weeks after the revolution. The sun smiled in the heavens ; a glorious spring day.

The River Dniester formed the boundary, the so-called no man's land, between the German-Austrian and the Russian troops. On either side of the river the heights were lined with trenches, and outposts were stationed on each bank.

Southward of Halicz, forming the extreme left wing of the Austrian Third Army, lay the German *Landsturm* regiment, commanded by Lieut.-Colonel Knopf. For days past the Russians had been asking whether they might visit us on Easter Sunday. The regimental staff called up to inquire whether I could come to them, as no one there spoke Russian. I decided to drive to the place. My chauffeur did not seem to have much faith in the peaceful atmosphere when I ordered him to drive right up to the trenches.

A RUSSIAN SOLDIERS' COUNCIL PAYS US A VISIT

I had to explain to him that both sides had agreed not to fire a shot on Easter Sunday.

To win the confidence of the Russians I had brought three bottles of brandy with me. At the edge of the river stood Lieut.-Colonel Knopf with some of his men, while on the opposite bank some forty or fifty Russians beckoned to us with their caps.

The Russians had seen me coming down the hill in a car and evidently took me, as one might say, for a "brass hat." When, therefore, I walked to the bank and greeted Lieut.-Colonel Knopf, they waved to us more vigorously than ever.

"*Christos voskresse !*" I shouted across the river.*

At this the Russians opened their mouths and eyes, and shouted in chorus.

"*Voistinu voskress !*"

The Russians gazed at me in amazement as though I were some marvellous animal. Then an elderly N.C.O. called across :

"Are you a Russian, Sir ? We would like to pay you a visit, and we wish you and your soldiers a merry Easter. But the trouble is we have no boat !"

"No, I'm not a Russian," I shouted back. "But if you want to visit us you'll be heartily welcome. I'll send a boat over for you."

Then I asked our men whether one of them would take a boat over to fetch the Russians. While some of them scratched their heads and in their mind's

* "Christ is risen !" The usual Russian formula of greeting on Easter Sunday.

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eye saw themselves behind barbed wire in a Siberian prison camp, a private named Kujat came forward.

"To show you that I'm not afraid, I'll come with you," said I, and stepped into the boat.

As we pushed off the Russians on the other bank raised a cheer.

"Good luck—and give my love to Siberia!" Colonel Knopf called after us gaily.

Although I was certain that the Russian soldiers meant to treat us honorably and had not the slightest intention of laying hands on us, I nevertheless held a parley with them before we landed.

"And suppose you take us prisoner?" I called to them. "We have no special yearning for Siberia. It's much nicer here!"

The Russians laughed heartily and three of them stepped forward. "We three represent the soldiers' council of the Thirty-third Army Corps," they cried in unison. "We guarantee your freedom and safety with our own lives!"

At this we drew into the bank.

We had a most cordial reception, all pressing forward to shake hands.

"I'm sorry, but the boat will only hold five," I told them. "At first, therefore, I can only take three of you; but I'll keep sending the boat back so that in time you will all be able to get across."

"Many thanks," they replied.

CHAPTER SIXTEEN

BEHIND THE RUSSIAN LINES

I LET the three members of the soldiers' council enter the boat and then we rowed back. Then my brave soldier companion went back for another load. The council's deputation saluted Colonel Knopf with military smartness, and then greeted our men. We all went into a comfortable and roomy dug-out not far from the river bank. There was a long table flanked by two benches. Private Kujat must have put his back into the oars, for every ten minutes a fresh batch of Russians entered the dug-out. Eventually it became so crowded that the late-comers had to remain outside.

We had a great talk in that dug-out. So many questions were hurled at me by the Russians that I found it hard to answer them in turn. Colonel Knopf sat next to me, and to the right and left of us squatted the members of the soldiers' council. Every now and then I broke off to translate the gist of our conversation to the colonel. Meanwhile I had produced my three bottles of brandy, but as there were at least twenty Russians in the dug-out they were, unfortunately, soon empty. "What is your rank, Sir?" one of the council members enquired.

"We would like to know whom we are talking to."

"I am a senior lieutenant and a cavalryman—what you would call a staff captain of cavalry."

"Tell us, please, Captain," the man continued; "our officers are always saying to us that the Germans are out to destroy and break Russia up, and that the Germans hate the Russians like poison. But here you are treating us so decently and your soldiers seem so friendly and genial that I can hardly believe what we have been told. What is the real truth about it?"

At once my instincts as an Intelligence Officer were alert again. I saw in these people the best possible material for propaganda against the new Russian Government, which had deposed the Tsar in order to wage war against us more fiercely on the side of the Entente.

"Of course, your officers are fooling you," I began. "The Germans have never hated the Russians; they have never dreamed of destroying Russia. The German Government is ready at all times to make peace with Russia, but your Government won't have it. You are meant to shed your last drop of blood in the interests of France and England. Here, sitting next to me, is the regimental commanding officer. He doesn't know what we are talking about, yet I am certain that he thinks exactly as I and the other German officers do. Can any of you speak German?"

"I can," one of them called.

"Well, ask the colonel of the regiment," I said.

"We certainly don't hate the Russian people, and whoever tells you anything different is lying," declared Colonel Knopf. "Our Government is undoubtedly ready to make peace with Russia at once. In fact, we have already and repeatedly proclaimed our readiness for peace."

"The colonel of the regiment fully confirms all that the staff captain here has told us," the soldier explained to his comrades. "It's clear enough, therefore, that we have been told lies."

We remained for several hours in lively conversation. I could see plainly that my remarks had made a deep impression on the Russian soldiers. Not until evening approached did the conference break up.

"We have a very big favour to ask of you, Sir," said the soldiers' council representatives at parting.

"Come over to us and make an address to our soldiers on the same lines as you have spoken to us."

"I'll come willingly," I answered; "but what would your officers say about it? They would have me arrested because I had told you the truth!"

"No, no," they cried in chorus. "We guarantee that not a hair of your head shall be harmed. We think it most important that you should speak to our men."

I was fully conscious that the affair was not without danger. If I were arrested on the other side I should get short shrift. They would hang me out of hand, in accordance with the laws of war, for

trying to suborn their troops. At best, I should be shot. On the other hand, I did not doubt that the Russian soldiers would keep their word. I therefore consented to go, and accompanied the three members of the soldiers' council across the river.

When I landed from the boat Russian soldiers came running up from all sides. Officers also appeared. The crowd continued to swell until in fifteen minutes it must have numbered at least 300 men. One soldier hurried up with a rickety chair.

"Please stand on the chair so that everybody can see you when you are speaking," said the spokesman of the soldiers' council. He was, in fact, the president, as I discovered later. The members of the council and the twenty men who had visited our lines grouped themselves round me like a bodyguard. Behind them stood the crowd in close formation. In the rear I noticed several officers, among them a general. On the river bank, standing by his boat, was the brave private Kujat. We, therefore, were two men against 300.

If the soldiers' council let me down I should certainly be hanged, and I will not deny that my heart beat rather faster than usual.

"The German staff captain is going to speak to you!" shouted one of the council members.

"Russian comrades!" I began. "The soldiers' council of the Thirty-third Army Corps has invited me to address you and has guaranteed me safe conduct. Your comrades here have heard on the



LIEUTENANT BAUERMEISTER DISTRIBUTING PROPAGANDA LEAFLETS
BEHIND THE RUSSIAN LINES. THE FIRST RUSSIAN SOLDIER ON THE
LEFT IS HOLDING SOME OF THESE LEAFLETS



other side of the river, from the mouth of the regimental commander, that the Germans have nothing against the Russian people. And all of us think alike on that point. We offer you the hand of peace ; it is for you to accept that hand. Not a man amongst us desires to smash Russia, or even to take any of her territory. Don't be deceived by the lying tales told you by the people who are keeping you here at the front, to be sacrificed as cannon fodder for France and England against Russian interests ! ”

At this point I was interrupted by such a storm of applause that it was several minutes before I was able to resume. The crowd was seized with tremendous enthusiasm, while in the background stood the officers, fuming with impotent rage. The general was observing me through his binoculars, while one of the officers appeared to be taking notes of my speech.

When the applause had partly subsided, the council president begged me to go on.

Calmly and objectively I explained to these Russians that their country had never had any reason to join in the world war against Germany. The original war-mongers had now been overthrown. Unfortunately, it was not possible to bring the dead to life. But this period of Russia's history was now ended, and her future lay henceforth in the hands of her soldiers' councils. At the end of my speech I cried aloud :

“ Do not give up the power that you have won ! Don't let yourselves be stupidly driven to the

shambles for the sake of France and England. Long live the peace between Germany and Russia ! ”

Then I stepped down from the chair. The enthusiasm was indescribable. Amidst loud cheers I was repeatedly seized and carried shoulder-high in the old Russian manner. On my return, Colonel Knopf told me that he had misunderstood this demonstration. When he saw me raised aloft he thought I was about to be hanged.

“ If Lieutenant Arnicke had not assured me at the last moment that it was a friendly demonstration, by God ! I would have opened fire ! ”

Countless Russian soldiers came up and grasped my hand. Then a captain shouldered his way through. “ Do you know what you are doing ? Inciting to mutiny ! That is what it is,” he repeated sharply : “ inciting the troops against their officers and the Government ! ”

The president of the soldiers’ council stepped forward. “ Don’t meddle in our affairs,” he told the officer roughly.

“ I see,” I remarked, turning to the captain, “ that you find the truth unpleasant.” A look of hatred was his only response. I entered the boat. Dusk was falling and a mist was creeping over river and valley.

“ Come back, come back soon ! ” called the Russians, waving their caps to me.

Colonel Knopf met me and gave me a powerful handclasp. “ Thank God, you’ve got back ! I have been sweating blood here.”

BEHIND THE RUSSIAN LINES

That evening I sent to G.H.Q. by the tape transmitter a report on this first visit to the Russian lines. At first they were incredulous. I was called up time after time and had to tell the story in full detail.

"Consider yourself lucky to have got back with a whole skin! It must have been enormously interesting to be there in the midst of the enemy's troops. I'll recommend you for a decoration," the commander-in-chief of the Austrian Third Army, Lieut.-General von Tersztianski, said to me.

And some days later the general invested me with the Austrian Service Cross, with golden clasp and swords.

Such was my first "visit" to the Russians.

* * * * *

The reader must not suppose that visits paid at this time to the Russian lines resembled in any way the perfectly safe ones that were made some months later, *after* the Bolshevik revolution. On the occasions I am now recording the visitors stood every time, and in the full sense of the word, on the brink of the grave. By the laws of war the Russians had every right to hang every German who crossed the lines with the object of subverting the Russian army.

From March, 1917, onward a new and wide field of activity lay open to the Intelligence Officer, in addition to all his other work. This new task was to bring about the disintegration of the Russian army by propaganda. In Germany there are still some

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over-scrupulous people who consider such methods "unfair," despite the "atrocities" propaganda employed against us. This view is altogether wrong. In time of war anything that may help the Fatherland is legitimate, and more especially when it is a method employed by the enemy on a colossal scale. Taking this sound view, the Entente carried out an extraordinarily vigorous propaganda campaign against us. And, above all, let us not forget that we found ourselves, in the sphere of propaganda, no less than in the actual fighting at the front, absolutely compelled to hit back.

At the very beginning of the war, in August, 1914, the Russian high command sent aeroplanes over our lines to drop pamphlets exhorting our soldiers to lay down their arms.

The Grand Duke Alexander Michailovitch, who died not long ago, had married the Tsar's sister and was a strong patriot. Yet in his memoirs he emphatically confirmed what I have said. "The German leaders," he wrote, "would not have deserved their success had they failed, after the revolution in March, 1917, to seize the chance of breaking up the Russian Army (by propaganda)."

Already on the third day after my first visit to the Russian lines I was called up by Lieutenant Arnicke, of Colonel Knopf's staff. Representatives of the Russian soldiers' council had been asking whether I could come over on the following day to give a brief address. Spokesmen from other regiments of the Eighth Army would be there, and they were most

BEHIND THE RUSSIAN LINES

anxious to meet me so that they could explain the situation to their troops. Of course, I agreed.

Next morning at 10 o'clock I was standing on our side of the Dniester. Even from a distance the Russians sent greetings by waving their caps.

"Good morning, Herr Staff Captain!" they shouted across the river.

As our dug-out was roomy and comfortable, I invited them to come over to us. For a time those representatives of the soldiers' council who did not yet know us hesitated. They doubtless feared that we might lay violent hands on them.

"I pledge my word for your safe conduct!" I called to them.

Thereupon they got into the boat. We all sat together in the same dug-out as on Easter Sunday. Our visitors included representatives of five other regiments and two delegates from the staff of the Eighth Army.

As I had done on the first occasion, I explained the situation to them, but this time I put it more strongly that the new Russian Government, which had promised the people peace, had in reality no intention of making peace, but on the contrary was preparing to wage the war more fiercely than ever to serve the interests of the Entente.

"If what you say is true," remarked the representatives of the Eighth Army staff, "we'll throw the Government out and bring in a new one that will quickly give the Russian people the promised peace."

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“ I wonder if you’ll succeed in that ? ”

“ Leave that to us and remember the words I have just spoken ! ” was his retort.

Four months later his words were fulfilled to the letter.

CHAPTER SEVENTEEN

I CONCLUDE THE FIRST ARMISTICE OF THE WAR : LENIN, TROTSKY AND MYSELF

AFTER a very interesting political conversation lasting nearly five hours, in the course of which several of the Russian soldiers jotted down notes, the Russians suggested an unofficial armistice in the front sector of the 33rd Army Corps. "But you are not authorised to conclude such an armistice," I pointed out. "Legally, no," was the reply ; "you are right there. But in view of our influence among the troops you may rest assured that not a shot will be fired."

"I will let you know our decision in a few minutes," I told them. Then, going into Colonel Knopf's dug-out, I got into telephonic communication with Lieut.-General von Tersztianski.

After I had explained to him how extraordinarily valuable the Russian proposal would be in view of our propaganda, the general declared his agreement. I then went back to the conference.

"I have just been telephoning to the commander-in-chief of the army," I said. "He informs me that he will issue orders that within the zone of your 33rd Army Corps no shooting is to take place unless

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your side fires first. So it is up to you to show your good faith."

My words gave them lively satisfaction. They all wanted to shake my hand and promised to see to it that the agreement was honourably observed. At the beginning of this, the first unofficial armistice of the Great War, I accompanied the Russians back to their lines. The armistice was liberally toasted in several bottles of brandy, which I had brought with me. As it had grown dark and late, the Russians invited me to spend the night in one of their dug-outs. Not from any anxiety as to my liberty, but solely out of respect for the bugs and fleas, I tactfully declined their polite offer.

"I have still a lot of work to do to-night," I told them, and stepped into my boat.

When I landed on the other side I called back :
"Now, no shooting !"

"We pledge our lives to that !" they shouted in response.

By a strange coincidence it was with these same troops of the 8th Army that some months later, eight days after the Bolshevik revolution, I negotiated at Czernowitz the first *official* armistice of the war.

Pursuant to the agreement, complete peace now descended on the front. While the new Russian Government, having got over the first intoxication of freedom, proceeded systematically to reform the army and increase its fighting power for the purpose of relieving the Allies in the West by sacrificing Russian cannon fodder, the Russians on our front

I CONCLUDE THE FIRST ARMISTICE OF THE WAR

went on strike. They refused to do anything, laid their rifles aside, left the guns silent, and waited for peace.

I wrote a pamphlet, which the Russians promised to circulate throughout their army. In this I explained in detail that the new Russian Government had no intention of making peace ; that this promise was a gross betrayal ; that a new offensive was being planned in order to relieve the Anglo-French front, and that the Russian soldier was to be expended as food for the guns. I had five hundred copies of this pamphlet printed and handed them over to the soldiers' council of the 8th Army.

* * * * *

During the next few weeks I went almost daily to the banks of the Dniester. While the soldiers' council honestly did their utmost to further my propaganda, the Russian authorities in the interior were trying by every means to re-arm the nation and drive it into a more vigorous prosecution of the war. As early as June I had to admit that the war propaganda was approaching the front, slowly but surely. That incompetent neurasthenic Kerensky, a blind servant of the Entente, had been appointed to the supreme command. The pacifist soldiers' councils were cleverly and quietly superseded by supporters of the war.

Some days later I even had an opportunity of seeing this new commander-in-chief at close quarters.

It was a glorious warm summer's evening. German

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and Russian soldiers were bathing together in the Dniester. German soldiers sat on the Russian bank and Russian soldiers on ours. While I took my ease on a tree stump near the bank and read the Russian newspapers which the Russian soldiers had brought to me, some of them played the balalaika and the concertina in the national fashion. In the midst of the war, then in its last, decisive phase, we had this incredibly peaceful picture.

Suddenly there was a movement on the heights opposite to us, hard by the river bank. I took up my binoculars. A group of officers came into sight, among them a small, clean-shaven man, who gesticulated continually with his hands. I was strongly reminded of the old ghetto in Prague. The nervous little man took up his field-glasses and stared in fury at the peaceful scene on the banks of the Dniester. Then he turned to the officers and spoke excitedly, his hands fluttering as before. "That is Kerensky," said one of my Russian friends.

So this nervous gentleman was the new head of State.

"Don't let us worry any more about this chatter-box from St. Petersburg," said the Russians to me, turning their backs upon him.

In about ten minutes the group disappeared. Without doubt the nervous Mr. Kerensky would have caused fire to be opened on us had not his staff pointed out that in that case we should have immediately opened fire upon them.

Since Easter Sunday I had always worn my old



THE AUTHOR, WITH OTHER GERMAN AND AUSTRIAN OFFICERS, BEHIND THE RUSSIAN LINES



THE AUTHOR BEHIND THE RUSSIAN LINES



I CONCLUDE THE FIRST ARMISTICE OF THE WAR

white Cuirassier cap and had thus become known to the Russians on the other side as "the officer with the white cap." Apparently the officers had told Mr. Kerensky about my visits and my propaganda against his Government and his Allies, for on the following day the commander-in-chief of the 8th Army issued an order to the effect that "the German officer in the white cap" was to be fired upon wherever he was seen.

The Russians told me of this on the following evening.

"It goes without saying that the order won't be obeyed, Captain," the soldiers' council assured me. "We have already seen to that. You may be certain that nobody will shoot you, and we hope to see you amongst us just the same as before."

I never doubted the good faith of these men, even though they naturally could not answer for every individual. Twice during the two months of our peaceful armistice I was fired at. Of course, I could not hold the soldiers' council responsible for this, especially as in both cases they took prompt measures and did all in their power to prevent a recurrence.

The first incident occurred some four weeks after my original visit. A battery opened fire on me. As usual, I had my car driven right down to the bank of the Dniester. As the car came over the hill leading down to the river a shrapnel burst behind us.

"That really looks like business, Sir," said my chauffeur, putting his brakes on hard.

"Drive on to the bank quietly," I answered.

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“Look at the crowd of Russians running towards the battery ! It won’t fire any more.”

After four weeks of profound peace this solitary shot caused a tremendous commotion. I rushed to the nearest telephone. It was high time, for our battery commanders wanted to return the fire forthwith. It was no easy matter to explain to them that a mistake had been made, that the shot had been aimed not at our troops but at me personally, and that the Russian battery in question had acted entirely on its own initiative, in defiance of orders from the soldiers’ council.

And so it proved to be. Only two men remained on the river bank ; all the rest had rushed to the battery, over which the white flag now waved. Then the Russians came streaming back in hordes.

“The officer who gave the order to fire bolted when we arrived !” they cried. “Never mind, we’ll catch him in the end, and then he’ll be sorry he was ever born !”

The president of the soldiers’ council at once scudded over to us to make his apologies. “You will hear more about the incident to-morrow,” he declared. And the Russians kept their word. During the night the battery in question was raided by infantrymen, the telephone wires were cut, and the breech-blocks removed from the guns. In the presence of the soldiers’ council delegates the breech-blocks were thrown into the Dniester, thus rendering the guns useless.

On the second occasion a bullet whistled not more

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than a hairsbreadth past my ear. The man who fired it declared that he had been shooting at ducks. As I could not disprove his statement, I begged the soldiers' council not to punish him.

* * * * *

Before I pass on to the Russian offensive in Galicia and thence to the final collapse of the Russian army and the seizure of power by the Bolsheviks, I would like to relate how certain people on the Russian side tried to catch me, and how I should certainly have been hanged but for the intervention of the soldiers' councils.

After repeated invitations from various soldiers' councils of the Eighth Army, I decided to pay a visit to a divisional staff some three miles behind the Russian front. Here a number of council delegates were waiting to hear me give an address on the general situation. Hitherto I had never been far behind the Russian trenches, though even there I could, of course, easily have been arrested. This time the risk was considerably greater. If the soldiers' councils had failed to establish their influence in the divisional staff area I should be a doomed man.

The staff headquarters were in a small village and my lecture was to take place in the local school house. When I began to speak the large room was filled to capacity. Among the audience this time were several officers, including one general. I presented my usual arguments and strongly excited

my hearers when I explained to them that the new Russian Government had swindled them out of the promised peace and, instead of making peace with Germany, was preparing to use the Russian armies once more as cannon fodder.

As I said this the Russian general interrupted me.

"Are you aware, Captain, that we have entered into engagements and that these engagements must be kept?"

"Certainly I am aware of that, Sir," I retorted; "but the interests of Russia ought to come first with you. While your Government is fighting for the interests of France and England, Russia is bleeding to death!"

My reply was greeted with thunderous applause, which made it impossible to speak for several minutes.

"As you say, Sir," I continued; "you have to go on fighting. But why, then, did your Government promise your soldiers the earliest possible peace if it intended to continue the war? That, to put it bluntly, is treachery!"

More deafening applause. The general did not reply. He left the hall looking crestfallen, and did not return until ten minutes later.

During this interval his mood seemed to have changed, for on his return he addressed me again. "I have been thinking over what you have said, and would like to make you a proposal. Will you come with me to G.H.Q.? They would un-

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doubtedly be much interested there in your statements, and I place my car at your disposal."

I saw through the trap, and after a brief deliberation replied : " I am sorry to have to decline your friendly invitation, not having any desire, at the moment, to commit suicide. I have not the least doubt that the people at your headquarters take a lively interest in me. But only the court-martial officials ! And I haven't the slightest desire to swing on the gallows ! "

When, some minutes later, I stood in the road surrounded by the soldiers, the council delegates told me of what had happened in the meantime. " The general was absent for ten minutes, Captain, and during this time he 'phoned to headquarters, telling them that the anonymous German officer in the white cap was with him at the staff billet. We listened-in to this conversation. When it was over we called up the soldiers' council at G.H.Q. and told them that you had visited us under a safe conduct, and, further, that we were four hundred strong and would resist any attempt against you by force of arms. The general only wanted to entice you into a trap, but we would not have let you go under any circumstances."

Dusk was falling as we reached the Russian trenches on the Dniester. About 300 Russians escorted me, and at the head of this procession I walked with the soldiers' council of the 33rd Army Corps. Private Kujat had brought the boat across for me, and was anxiously awaiting my

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return. He was delighted when at last I did turn up.

"I thought something must have happened to you, Sir, for you have never been away so long before. Over ten hours!"

Late that evening I made a detailed report to G.H.Q.

I was naturally most gratified when a telegram reached me announcing that the Kaiser, in consideration of my exceptional courage, had bestowed upon me the Knight's Cross of the Order of Hohenzollern, with swords and crown.

* * * * *

It has been alleged that at or about this time I had an interview with Lenin, Trotsky, and Joffe in the fortress of Kronstadt, near St. Petersburg; but this story is on a par with the imaginary spy exploits of "Mademoiselle Docteur" and others of that ilk. Not until the war was over did I hear of my "visit" to Kronstadt.

In connection with the German-American economic negotiations I one day received a request from the Foreign Office to attend there in order to discuss a very important matter. I had to laugh heartily at what they told me there.

The United States claimed not only to have received "reliable" information about this alleged meeting in Kronstadt, but actually to possess the "original document" which related to impending acts of sabotage against American interests in

Russia and bore the signatures of Lenin, Trotsky, Joffe and myself. The Foreign Office official showed me a photograph of the document. It was, of course, easy enough to forge the well-known signatures of Lenin and Trotsky. As for Joffe, who was the first Bolshevik ambassador to Germany, the Foreign Office possessed several specimens of his signature. A comparison of these genuine signatures with those on the document instantly exposed the latter as forgery.

Since the American *agent provocateur* who had fabricated this document, and who had certainly pocketed a nice sum for his pains, had found it impossible to obtain a copy of my signature, he had simply forged it haphazard. It bore not the faintest resemblance to my writing.

I was able to testify on oath, with a clear conscience, first that my signature was a forgery and secondly that I had not been at Kronstadt in July, 1917, nor at any other time during the war.

But as an old Intelligence Officer I was astonished at the childish innocence of the American authorities in purchasing, certainly at a high price, this fraudulent document.

How, in the midst of war, was I to penetrate into the strictly guarded fortress of Kronstadt, which, moreover, stood on the island of Kotlin? I must have worn the cap that renders one invisible! And Lenin? Hunted by the Kerensky Government which desired to arrest him, Lenin was hiding in Finland. Had he landed at Kronstadt, he would

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have been recognised and apprehended in five minutes at latest. Any rationally minded person can therefore only chuckle at this particularly stupid yarn about the Kronstadt meeting, and feel pity for those who to this day believe in such backstairs gossip.

CHAPTER EIGHTEEN

THE IMMORTALS OF THE WOMEN'S BATTALION : THE DEATH OF FELIX

ABOUT one week before the beginning of the Kerensky offensive in Galicia the members of the soldiers' council of the 33rd Army Corps visited me to say farewell. "The offensive has now been definitely decided upon by the Government," the Russian soldiers informed me. "As we cannot do anything against them, we have got to take part in it. Perhaps it is better so. Defeat is inevitable, and when it comes it will sweep our present rulers away. The new rulers will then immediately conclude peace. Remember our words and accept our best wishes, Sir ! Let us hope that we shall soon meet again !"

I shook hands cordially with the Russians, and felt truly sorry to part from these men, who had always stoutly kept their word. They were in no sense Bolsheviks. Rightly appreciating that Russia must be bled white if the war went on, they honestly desired peace.

The Russian offensive against the German Southern Army commanded by Count Bothmer was speedily repulsed ; at other points the Russians

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scored minor successes. Then the German counter-offensive began. All along the front concerned the Russians broke into panic-stricken flight. Most remarkable were their wireless signals, some *en clair*, others in code, at this period. These made it evident that the army in its wild retreat had lost all moral cohesion. Gradually the confusion became so pronounced that eventually all radio messages were flashed in plain Russian. Corps and divisional commanders appealed to G.H.Q. for help, since the soldiers' councils no longer listened to orders and the troops abandoned their posts of their own volition.

Kerensky appealed to them by radio to resist the enemy and defend Russia.

The soldiers simply laughed at him.

Kerensky then threatened merciless and wholesale shootings, and broadcast the names and numbers of the regiments whose flight was assisting the foe.

Too late ! Nobody troubled about his orders, nobody feared his threats.

I was particularly pleased to find that the regiments which Kerensky named as being primarily responsible for the collapse of the army were the very ones which I had so often visited during the summer. My propaganda had, therefore, been completely successful. In a book published in the United States after the war I was even described—probably in connection with the silly fairy tales about Trotsky and Joffe—as the man chiefly

THE IMMORTALS OF THE WOMEN'S BATTALION

responsible for the break-down of the Russian army. . . .

* * * * *

Among the troops which the Russians launched against the Austrian Third Army was a women's battalion, known as "the Immortals." They were thrown in at the last moment and were new to us. After much had been talked and written about the Russian women's battalions, and legends founded on these modern Amazons, this strange blossom on the tree of Russian revolution was simply consigned to the realm of fantasy. On the other hand, a thousand jests, not all of them in the best of taste, were bandied about concerning these women who reported for service after the gigantic losses among the Russian troops. In any case, not all of the women who, through some form of aberration, fought at the front deserved the mockery and contempt which they generally received. There were, undoubtedly, some good patriots amongst them. When someone telephoned me from the front that female prisoners had been captured from a "Death Battalion" which had defended itself with extraordinary courage and had surrendered only after desperate resistance, I at first took it for a joke. Naturally, I proceeded to the front and interrogated these Amazons, who in contrast to their masculine comrades were newly and excellently equipped. Moreover, apart from the courage they had shown, their fanatical fighting spirit distinguished them from the ordinary soldiers. There

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was trustworthy evidence that they had "stood up to it"—at any rate these "Immortals" whom I was interviewing. The leader of the battalion was, it is true, a type of the hysterical old maid. "Ah!" she exclaimed on seeing me, "so this is the officer with the white cap who was particularly recommended to us! What a pity you got away—you certainly would not be alive if you hadn't!"

I laughed so loudly at the brave lady that she became embarrassed, and the torrent of her speech was checked. The others came nearer and regarded me curiously. Most of them were still very young, and, as they told me, were students. It was only natural that we did not take them very seriously as "she-warriors"—the same valuation, in fact, as their own masculine comrades had placed upon them. I discovered this for myself shortly afterwards. A troop of captured Russian soldiers arrived, and as soon as they perceived the martial ladies they broke into loud laughter, particularly at the "leaderess," who was still worried about being taken prisoner.

"We'll have to find her a handsome bridegroom!" bellowed a Russian N.C.O.

I took my leave of the martial Venus and our men escorted the Amazons to the next military post in the rear.

* * * * *

On October 4 Felix met the death which he had, apparently, long been seeking. In company with Petrovski he had been sent by me to Kamenez-

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Podolsk, to blow up a large Russian munition dépôt situated there.

A tremendous detonation and gigantic pillars of fire on the horizon told us that this, his final task, had as usual been brilliantly accomplished.

Two days later Petrovski reported himself back. He broke down completely when he told me that his friend Felix had been killed by the explosion.

"He can't have set the time fuse properly. It went off too soon, so that he was blown to pieces when the ammunition exploded."

Deeply moved, I gripped Petrovski's hand. He had formerly been a student and was a true friend to Felix.

"I think, Petrovski, that he has found what he had been looking for ever since Genia died!"

* * * * *

During the night of November 6-7, 1917, Leo Trotsky, whose real name is Bronstein, sat in what has since become the historic room on the third story of the Smolny Institute in St. Petersburg and pressed a bell. It rang quietly.

Robbed by Kerensky of the peace they desired, the Russian people chased away the Government as if it were a troublesome fly.

A few shots fired from the cruiser *Aurora* at the Winter Palace ended the business.

The new Government broadcast, by radio, an invitation to all the belligerent Powers to conclude an armistice. As was only to be expected, the

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Entente Powers declined the invitation, while Germany and the other Central Powers, true to their peaceful policy, announced their readiness to cease hostilities.

At this period we naturally concentrated our attention on the Russian wireless reports, all of which were now dispatched *en clair* (i.e., not in code). In this way we were kept informed, hour by hour, of the progress of events.

A radio message from the new Government to the Chief Staff Officer of the Army, General Dukhonin, instructed him to get immediately into touch with the German high command with a view to negotiating an armistice. This the general refused to do. The infuriated soldiers tore him out of his saloon compartment and hurled him under the wheels of an approaching train. He was killed on the spot.

Second-Lieutenant Krylenko, sent by the St. Petersburg Government to headquarters as their plenipotentiary, assumed the leadership of the Russian Army.

* * * * *

Some days after the Bolshevik revolution I was called up from one of our regiments at the front and told that a Russian delegation had approached our trenches, urgently requesting speech with "the officer in the white cap." In two hours my car drove up to the trench line.

Great was our mutual joy, for the delegates were my old friends of the Dniester, the soldiers' council of

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the 8th Army. The Russians embraced me and shook my hand time and again.

“Well, what did we promise you, Sir?” laughed the president. “You remember that time on the Dniester? And now it’s come quicker than we expected. We want to arrange an official armistice with you, and therefore beg you to come back with us to army staff headquarters to talk things over. Conditions now are different. You remember that once before they tried to trap you into going to headquarters. Well, to-day you can go still further and nobody will harm a hair of your head.”

“I don’t doubt that,” was my answer. “First of all let us clear away the barbed wire on the road here so that I can get my car through. Your own car is a bit too crowded.” In half an hour the wire had been removed. Three of the Russians got into my car, while the rest travelled in their own.

I started this trip with feelings very different from those I had experienced during the summer. At that time we never knew when starting out in the morning whether we would not be adorning a Russian gallows by the evening.

This time all the soldiers and patrols we met gave us an ovation. Now and again we had to stop. At the request of the soldiers’ council I had frequently to make a short speech to the troops. As we drove through a small village a whole horde of soldiers came to meet us, waving their caps.

“Stop, Mr. Staff Captain, stop!” they cried in chorus.

I stopped the car.

They were my old friends from the Dniester, belonging to the 141st Regiment, which Kerensky had castigated so severely in his Army Orders. "We have talked about you so often, Sir, and we were speaking of you only yesterday. It's good to see you again, looking so fit and lively." Although we were in a hurry I could not disappoint these brave fellows, so I stepped out of the car.

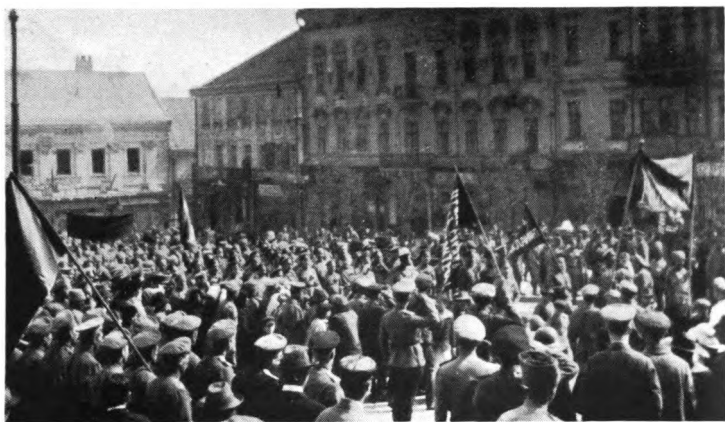
Noticing a tea shop at the next corner, I invited the Russians to drink tea with me. The old Jew (café proprietors in the Russian frontier districts seemed invariably to be Jews) opened his eyes wide when he saw a German officer accompanied by Russian soldiers entering his premises. "Dat's a German general!" I heard him whisper to his wife. He drew that conclusion because I had turned up the collar of my cloak, the lining of which was pale red.

"But vot a young general!" I heard him say again, and then he suddenly raised his hands in boundless amazement.

"God of the Just! Der German general speaks Russian like a native!"

I bought up his last remaining cakes, which were decidedly dry and stale, and offered them to my Russian friends. After promising the latter that I would positively come back in a few days' time, I continued my journey. "May you live to be a hundred, Sir general!" the old Jew called after me, bowing almost to the threshold.

Owing to various unavoidable halts on the way,



**SCENE AT STAFF H.Q. OF GENERAL LITZMANN, WHEN THE AUTHOR
NEGOTIATED THE FIRST ARMISTICE OF THE WAR**



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we reached Kamenez-Podolsk, where the 8th Army headquarters were situated, three hours late. But thanks to the notorious unpunctuality of the Russians that mattered not at all.

In the great market square thousands of men had assembled to see the German officer who had come to make peace with the Russians. When my car, bearing a large white flag on the radiator, drew up before army headquarters and stopped, the crowd burst into a shout of "*Da sdravstvujet mir!*" ("Hurrah for peace!").

"Please say a few words to the crowd," begged the president of the soldiers' council. I consented to do so, and mounted on to the seat of the car.

"Citizens of Kamenez-Podolsk!" I cried loudly. "It is a very great pleasure to me to be here in order, as I hope, to conclude to-morrow the first official armistice of the war, now that the treacherous Kerensky Government has been driven out. The German Government has repeatedly offered the hand of peace—but Mr. Kerensky rejected it. That hand is now offered again to the Russian people. This time the Russian Government will accept it. Long live the peace between Germany and Russia, between the German and Russian nations!"

Loud and prolonged cheering greeted my brief address. The crowd surged forward so strongly that I had some difficulty in getting out of my car. In the ante-room of the staff building I was met by a young general officer, who extended his hand. This was General Hecker, whom the soldiers' council had

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chosen as the new commander-in-chief of the army. The staff office was crowded with officers and soldiers standing side by side as General Hecker introduced me.

I saw many well-known faces and exchanged nods with them. In a relatively short time we had come to an agreement as to the terms of the armistice. It was then decided to sign the armistice treaty on the following day at staff headquarters of the (German) Litzmann Army Group. After I had again addressed the soldiers, the new commander-in-chief, General Hecker, made a speech to them.

He was a magnificent orator. In burning sentences he extolled the Bolshevik revolution which at long last had brought peace to the Russian nation, and he thanked the troops for the confidence they had placed in him by appointing him head of the Army. Some of the passages in his speech were so blood-thirsty and vindictive that I was moved to profound astonishment. Was he really such a fanatical revolutionary? Or merely a cool opportunist and an office-seeker? It was not for me to judge. Later on I heard that he had been for many years a radical. Be that as it may, this general was by far the most remarkable character of all those whom I met on the Russian side. He continued to hold high military rank in the Bolshevik service, and holds it yet.

November 14, 1917. A cold November day. Snow had already fallen in the Carpathians and an icy wind whistled over the fields. Punctually at 10 a.m. the negotiations began. Before the staff

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buildings of the Litzmann Army Group stood three Russian motor cars, each bearing a large white flag on the radiator. Thousands of people thronged the square and the streets.

On our side presided General Litzmann, representing at the same time his own Army Group. General von Bersewicz, chief of staff, was present on behalf of the Austrian 3rd Army. On the Russian side the negotiations were in the hands of the soldiers' councils of the 8th Army, to whom were attached several officers as technical advisers.

As none of us spoke Russian save myself, I acted as interpreter. Every ten minutes or so I translated into German my conversation with the Russians. At 12.40 p.m., after complete agreement had been reached between the Litzmann Army Group and the Austrian 3rd Army on the one side and the Russian 8th Army on the other, the armistice was definitely signed.

After that we all lunched together. I was placed opposite to His Excellency General Litzmann, and on either side of me sat the two presidents of the 8th Army soldiers' council. Their conversation with General Litzmann, which I interpreted, was very animated, and eventually our Russian visitors left the staff building in high good humour. As I appeared with them in the street the populace gave us an enthusiastic reception. I escorted the Russians on their way back as far as our trenches.

On the following day white flags were fluttering along the whole front of the Russian 8th Army, and

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a complete cessation of warfare ensued. Day by day the Russian lines dwindled in strength. There began a mass migration towards the east, the soldiers being anxious not to arrive too late for the promised grants of land.

My work in this sector of the front was now at an end. But for isolated detachments which merely served to demarcate the front, the Russian 8th Army was dispersed.

After a brief tour of duty at G.H.Q. in Spa I was entrusted with a new and very important mission against Russia : the organisation of a new Intelligence service against the Red Army.

The Bolshevik Government which had brought about the disintegration of Kerensky's armies had all along been aware that no State can exist without an army.

Using as a nucleus the so-called Red Guards—sheer bandits from our point of view—they began to build up an efficient army under the leadership of Trotsky. This, however, was not all. In the southern, the south-eastern and the eastern regions of Russia the opponents of the Bolshevik Government were assembling White troops, whose task was to overthrow the Bolsheviks and, eventually, to resume the war against Germany on the side of the Entente after repudiating the peace treaty of Brest-Litovsk. Thus a new and promising field of activity had been opened, and I therefore betook myself to Reval.

CHAPTER NINETEEN

THE MASTER SPY OF THE GREAT WAR

ONE day an elegant gentleman in a trench coat visited my assistant, with a request for a private interview with me. By way of precaution my assistant searched him for hidden weapons.

"I fully appreciate the need for these safety measures," said the stranger equably. He was, in fact, unarmed.

He introduced himself to me as "Captain N., of the General Staff." * After explaining that he hated the international Bolsheviks from the depths of his heart, he offered his services to me as an agent. "Please don't misunderstand me," he added. "I should naturally have refused indignantly and resolutely to spy against a Tsarist Russia. But now things are quite different. The Bolsheviks have destroyed Russia ; they are massacring the intelligentsia, exterminating the old corps of officers. Have you heard of the ghastly executions of Generals Rennenkampf, Russki, and Radko-Dmitriev ? Do you know that in the Government of Vologda and Archangel these beasts in human form have impaled hundreds of priests alive on pointed stakes ? That

* For obvious reasons I have withheld his real name.

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at Kronstadt hundreds of naval officers, bound together with barbed wire, were thrown into the sea? That thousands of absolutely innocent people, men, women and even children, have been executed merely because they were not proletarians by birth? No crime is too horrible for the people who have done these things. I want to enter your service in order that I may injure these alien usurpers wherever I can. Being employed in the highest military circles I can, without a doubt, furnish you with valuable information."

I paid this Staff Captain a wage that was absurdly small in comparison with the value of his reports. He was unquestionably the most important spy of the whole war. During the following months he supplied, by means of weekly reports, the most complete and minutely detailed description of the Red Army, then being formed. No other agent of the war period had anything like the same opportunities for collecting material. Officers who were at that time attached to the Foreign Armies' Department at German G.H.Q. will assuredly corroborate this statement.

By means of letters written in invisible ink he reported to me every week until December, 1918. Thanks to him we had a complete knowledge of the organisation and fighting power of the Red Army down to the uttermost detail. In contrast to the numerous "super-spies" whose imaginary exploits have been lauded since the war, and who either did not exist at all or were occupied with quite un-

important work, Staff Captain N. was in the literal sense of the phrase the master spy of the Great War.

* * * * *

As I have already said, one must not shrink from using any means to promote the welfare of the Fatherland. This notwithstanding, I personally never made use of what I may call "terrorist" methods, nor did any other German Intelligence Officer. But the enemy's Intelligence people viewed the matter in a different light.

They enlisted in their service one of the most notorious of the Russian terrorists, the adventurer Boris Savinkov, who in association with the infamous Asef had already caused the murder of the Grand Duke Sergei Alexandrovitch and the Minister von Plehve.

With the object of provoking us into breaking off diplomatic relations with Moscow and thus compelling us to retain German forces in the East, the social-revolutionary fighting organisation controlled by Boris Savinkov contrived the assassination first of the German Ambassador, Count Mirbach, and, shortly afterwards, of Field-Marshal von Eichhorn.

But these cowardly murders failed of their purpose. Rightly appreciating the facts of the affair, which we knew to be the work of Entente agents, we made no change in our military policy.

In the course of the war I was frequently approached by reckless men who offered to commit such deeds. Not long after the execution of poor

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Genia, Felix volunteered to assassinate the Tsar while the latter took his daily constitutional in Mogileff. He proposed to disguise himself as a poor peasant presenting a petition, and then with a bomb under each arm to hurl himself at the Tsar's feet, perishing with his victim in the explosion.

I explained to Felix, however, that such an assassination could only do us harm. Were the Tsar to be murdered it was certain that the Grand Duke Nicholas Nikolaievitch, the most implacable anti-German in all Russia, would again become commander-in-chief. Some months later Felix offered to murder General Brussiloff in the same fashion. But again I declined the proposal.

"First of all I should lose you, my most daring agent ; and, secondly, Brussiloff is a nonentity in the military sense. If he were removed it is highly probable that some more competent man would take his place, and then we should only be worse off than before."

One day at Reval a young girl belonging to the best St. Petersburg society came to see me. She told me that with her mother she had fled from St. Petersburg after the Bolsheviks had shot her father and her brother, and she then offered to shoot Lenin for me if I would indemnify her mother with 20,000 marks (£1,000).

The plan she proposed was a good one, and seemed to be entirely practicable. But I explained to her that we were not in the least interested.

"I am speaking to you as a German, Nadeshda

THE MASTER SPY OF THE GREAT WAR

Pavlovna," I said. "If Lenin were to be murdered the Bolsheviks might possibly fall. But in their place would come a Government which would again declare war against Germany. You will therefore see that however much we may detest him and his fellows, we are not concerned to have Lenin murdered."

Not long after this episode a fanatical old social-revolutionary came and offered to shoot the People's Commissary, Trotsky-Bronstein. Him, too, I told that I would not pay a farthing for such an attempt, because it would not do the slightest good to the German cause, even in a military sense.

* * * * *

One day I was called up by the Intelligence Officer, Captain M., who requested that, in connection with a very interesting matter, I should be at Reval railway station next day when the express from Narva arrived, in order to receive a colonel of the Russian General Staff who was coming from St. Petersburg.

Great was my astonishment when Captain M. got out of the train accompanied by a man dressed as a peasant, in whom, despite his disguise, I at once recognised the elegant Staff Colonel D., of St. Petersburg.

It was in every respect a smart enterprise. Colonel D. held a responsible post as General Staff officer in the St. Petersburg military area. He reminded me in many ways of the Russian General Staff Captain

SPIES BREAK THROUGH

N. whom I have already mentioned. He, too, had entered the Bolshevik service—as a fanatical nationalist—with the object of combating and smashing Bolshevism. While outwardly in Bolshevik service, he was actually the confidential agent of a Russian monarchist group in the St. Petersburg military zone.

A party of pro-German Russian monarchists had got into touch with the Grand Duke Pavel Alexandrovitch, who lay under arrest in St. Petersburg. Their plan was to overthrow Bolshevism with Germany's help, to conclude a Russo-German alliance, and to proclaim the Grand Duke as Chief Executive of Russia. After repeated solicitations the Grand Duke had given his assent to the plan, and Colonel D. had therefore been commissioned to convey this proposal to German G.H.Q., bringing with him a letter in the Grand Duke's handwriting which he had secreted between the sole of the boot on his right foot.

It would serve no purpose now to indulge in speculations as to whether we acted rightly or wrongly in this matter. The fact remains that Colonel D. went back a deeply disappointed man. The German Government had found itself unable to decide upon acceptance of the proposal. The decisive factor may well have been the critical situation on the Western front. This was taxing our resources to the very last man, and we had no reserves available to undertake big commitments in the East.

THE MASTER SPY OF THE GREAT WAR

Unfortunately, in this particular case too many people were let into the secret, and the affair was betrayed. The tragic sequel was related to me soon afterwards by the Cheka Commissary for Special Service, Antonoff. His story was as follows :

The St. Petersburg Cheka learned through a French agent in Berlin that negotiations had taken place between the German Government and the imprisoned Grand Duke Pavel Alexandrovitch with a view to overthrowing the Bolsheviks and restoring the Russian monarchy. In consequence of this, the head of the Cheka, Dsiershinski, immediately ordered the Grand Duke to be shot.

The Grand Duke Pavel Alexandrovitch had been some months in prison, and was seriously ill. His weakness now was such that he lay all day and night on his bed, unable to stand.

Accompanied by several Cheka officials, the governor of the prison, Egoroff, entered the cell. With difficulty the Grand Duke sat up and surveyed his visitors.

" Citizen Romanoff ! " exclaimed the governor ; " you have been convicted of espionage on behalf of Germany. It has been proved that you made a proposal to the German Emperor that the Bolshevik Government be overthrown by force of arms. You have therefore been sentenced to death. Who are your accomplices ? "

To this the Grand Duke, who for weeks past had daily expected such an end, replied without the slightest tremor :

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"As a man of honour I refuse to answer your questions ! Or do you take me for a traitor ? I have been waiting for this for weeks. So get it over quickly !"

Two Chekists with pock-marked faces seized the Grand Duke by the arms and led him out of the cell. In the courtyard the executioner, with a heavy army revolver in his hand, was already waiting, and with him were four other Chekists. The Grand Duke was dragged across the courtyard to the place of execution, where he was placed in a chair.

"Give me time to say a short prayer," he requested the governor of the prison.

With his head bowed in his hands the Grand Duke began to pray. Absorbed in his devotions he did not hear the executioner step behind him and level the heavy army revolver at the back of his head.

A short, sharp detonation, which was audible in the other cells of the prison. Although this dread sound was heard several times a day, some no doubt crossed themselves and murmured a prayer.

With his skull shattered the Grand Duke pitched forward into the sand. He had died instantly.

Where he was buried no one knows.

The next night five motor lorries, loaded with corpses, drove out of the city. The dead were hastily buried beyond the confines of the city.

CHAPTER TWENTY

THE MOSCOW TRAP : TWO THOUSAND POUNDS OR DEATH

Two trustworthy agents had recently returned from Siberia with reports that seemed to be very serious. In Siberia the "Whites"—anti-Bolsheviks—were preparing a powerful blow at the Bolshevik Government. With the Czecho-Slovak legions, Austrian prisoners of war, they had considerable forces under their control, and the Bolsheviks were in retreat along the whole front. Moreover, the White troops were being supported in the district north of the Caspian Sea by the advancing army of General Krymoff, before whom the Bolshevik hordes were flying in panic.

If the Whites succeeded in inflicting a decisive defeat on the Bolshevik forces nothing would stand in their way. In that event they would, without a doubt, annul the peace treaty of Brest-Litovsk and declare war on us anew. Nor was there any doubt that the mass of the Russian populace, disgusted at the frightful atrocities of the Bolsheviks, would rally round a new White Government.

Were such a situation to develop our troops in the East would not be adequate, and we should have to withdraw forces from the Western front.

SPIES BREAK THROUGH

I was informed by Commissary Antonoff that a very grave view of the situation was taken in Moscow. He therefore proposed that I should visit him in Moscow to examine for myself the state of affairs.

I thought the matter over all night long, finally saying to myself that, anyway, one must die some day or other. Then better perish in the service of one's country than perhaps die ingloriously in bed of some malady ! Moreover, the Commissary Antonoff had given me his word of honour that he would support me unconditionally. So I decided to travel to Moscow *via* St. Petersburg.

At this juncture a sojourn in either St. Petersburg or Moscow was hardly to be recommended. The social-revolutionary Jewess, Dora Kaplan, had recently fired at Lenin and gravely wounded him. Whilst Lenin fought with death the Cheka ran amok. Day and night motor lorries packed with arrested people raced through the streets. On one day alone I counted seven fully-loaded lorries. The unfortunate prisoners were packed together like sardines, their faces convulsed, their eyes glassy. The women tore their hair and shrieked most pitifully for mercy. At this time two hundred men, women, and children were being butchered every day in the Cheka's Lubianka prison.

Moscow resembled a gigantic ant-hill. The *bourgeoisie* had left their dwellings, in order not to be discovered by the Cheka. They spent the night sleeping on staircases, in empty barracks, or deserted country houses.

THE MOSCOW TRAP

Commissary Antonoff had not only given me a safe conduct, but had also provided secure accommodation for me. This was formerly a citizen's dwelling which had now been placed under the "protection" of the Cheka.

One evening as I was passing through the Marosseika street on my way home, a young girl, almost a child, suddenly emerged from a doorway and threw herself upon me, sobbing in heart-rending fashion.

"Help me, if you are a Christian! I have not eaten anything for two days and I have no roof to shelter me!"

Thousands of these unhappy and homeless people were wandering aimlessly through the streets of Moscow. "Come with me," I said. "But you must not cry any more, or we shall attract attention if a patrol comes by and they will stop us."

Even to-day, despite the lapse of fifteen years, I still look back with horror at what I saw in Moscow in those days. Human life was not worth a farthing. The bourgeois class were shot down like dogs, their dwellings plundered, and valuables of all kinds squandered. No citizen knew in the morning whether he would be alive by evening. Families became separated in their flight. On the country roads and in the streets of the city thousands of orphaned children strayed.

After I had provided the young girl with a hearty meal she told me her story.

The Smolny Institute for daughters of the nobility had been closed. With her small savings she had

managed to reach her parents' estate. But where the castle of her ancestors had once stood lay now a heap of ruins. . . .

She sat down on a bench in the grounds upon which she had often rested in happier hours. Then she heard footsteps ; the old family retainer, Efim, stood before her. His dishevelled locks and staring eyes made him a weird figure. " Your Highness, your Highness ! " he exclaimed in a trembling voice.

He then told the young princess all that had happened. Led by an agitator from Moscow, the peasants had sacked the castle and set it on fire, after murdering the prince and his lady.

" An awful visitation from the Almighty has fallen on Russia ! " stammered the old man, raising his face to the sky. " You must go, your Highness, before the peasants see you ! " Old Efim then conducted the young princess by devious paths to the nearest railway station. " He pressed his last money upon me, the faithful old soul," she sobbed. " And the day before yesterday I spent the last 50 copecks on a loaf of bread."

I was deeply moved by this story, though it was but a minor episode, a mere fractional incident in the death of multitudes. Overcome by what she had been through, the young princess suddenly fell asleep in the chair in which she sat.

Without waking the poor child I laid her on the sofa and covered her with a rug.

Five rapid knocks resounded on the door : that was the signal I had arranged with my agent

THE MOSCOW TRAP

Petrovski. He had made his way through the White Army's front, and he gave me a detailed report on the military situation there. "It is only a temporary success. The Whites are short of munitions and they are not united. Even the senior leaders quarrel among themselves. The soldiers are freezing for want of winter clothing. Many of them are grumbling already. Bolshevik agents and agitators swarm behind the front, inciting the troops against their leaders."

Petrovski's statement confirmed at every point the various reports I had recently received in Moscow. In order to form a final judgment on the situation I made an appointment to meet my agent, Staff Captain N., the master spy to whom I have already referred, in one of the suburbs of Moscow.

"You here?—In the midst of the Bolsheviks!" he ejaculated, staring at me incredulously as though I were a ghost. "Well, that's the last thing I should ever have expected!"

He then informed me in the deepest dejection that what had been reported to me was true; that the White troops, left in the lurch by the Allies, without munitions or winter clothing, were lending an ever readier ear to the Bolshevik agitators.

"The cause is lost! In a very short time the attempt to save Russia will collapse," he said, drawing his hand across his eyes.

I now knew all that I wanted. There was no further danger for us. The success of the White Armies was only a passing affair. There was no

longer any question of the Bolsheviks being defeated. That the White Armies, deserted by the Entente and destitute of war material and clothing, would speedily collapse, was now certain.

The Grand Duke Michail Alexandrovitch, in his memoirs entitled "Once I was a Grand Duke," has related in moving words how the Allies not only left the Russians to their fate, but even delivered the White leader, Admiral Koltchak, over to the Bolsheviks through the agency of the French General, Janin. In lending himself to this detestable treachery General Janin must have known quite well that the Bolsheviks would shoot the admiral once they had him in their clutches.

And so it was.

The admiral had to pay with his life for his fidelity to the Entente. A gallant soldier from head to heel, Admiral Koltchak faced the rifles with perfect composure.

Even the brutal Red soldiery were deeply moved by the heroic conduct of the betrayed admiral.

At the place of execution Admiral Koltchak took a massive gold cigarette case from his pocket.

"I shan't need this when I am dead. It is solid gold and I give it to you. But don't shilly-shally over this business. I am not angry with you : it's not your fault. You have been ordered to shoot me. But do it quickly, my brothers, I beg of you !"

The admiral stood erect before the firing squad. The volley crashed out. Admiral Koltchak fell forward on to the grass. But in their nervous state

THE MOSCOW TRAP

the soldiers had aimed badly. . . . The admiral was not yet dead. So the officer in charge of the squad stepped forward and gave Koltchak the *coup de grâce* through his forehead. . . .

Whilst in the Lubianka prison of the Cheka the middle classes were being shot like mad dogs, whilst miserable fugitives hid in alley-ways and barracks and all life seemed dead, the Chekists with their spies and accomplices foregathered in secret clubs to hold orgies in celebration of the vile work they had done. To one of these clubs Commissary Antonoff introduced me.

The copious drinks that were consumed here as a sedative to nerves after the intoxication of bloodshed were paid for not with money but with jewels and other valuables taken from victims at their execution. It was well understood that the executioner came into possession of everything found upon his victim. On the first and only evening I visited this club I met that abominable wholesale executioner, Varga. Like so many of his vile trade, Varga was not a Russian. He was supposed to have been a Hungarian ; at all events he spoke Russian badly.

As I passed the table where he sat, very drunk and obviously under the influence of cocaine, he was boasting that on the previous night he had "settled" sixty-one "Burschui"—this being the slang term for members of the *bourgeoisie*. Then, diving into his right-hand trouser pocket, he produced a handful of rings set with brilliants and pearls. Another dive into the pocket and out came a number of gold

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watches which he laid on the table. Among them I noticed several ladies' watches.

"If only the women wouldn't make such a fuss about things," he growled. "Yesterday one of these 'bits' sprang at my throat and tried to strangle me. Yes, she didn't want to die and she had to die!"

I was overcome with horror at this disgusting beast in the form of a man. Thick pouches bulged under his eyes; his long black moustache hung down like a Chinaman's, and his skull was shaved. For two years he held the record for the number of his executions. Then, one day, he was thrown into a madhouse. Drunk with blood after several executions, he had suddenly turned on his assistants and shot six of them down one after the other.

When I returned to my own table I found seated on the chair next to mine a damnably beautiful woman, wearing the uniform of the Cheka. "She is from the ballet of the Grand Theatre—the Opera," said my neighbour; "and was once the mistress of a Grand Duke. She is so fond of money and so utterly callous that she sometimes horrifies me. But as a helper she is uncommonly valuable to us; we use her for particularly delicate transactions."

A few minutes later I was in animated conversation with this beautiful police spy. I ordered three bottles of wine and was the only person present who paid in money. Towards midnight the crowd was in the wildest spirits, yet only a few streets away their unhappy victims waited with fevered eyes for the dreadful end. The executioner Varga, now so



MASS EXECUTION OF RUSSIAN SPIES



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J

drunk that he could hardly stand, was talking again, this time about a particularly repulsive execution which had taken place in the previous week.

"Won't you keep up the fun with me a little longer?" I was asked by the pretty Chekist, who ordered another bottle of champagne. "I can tell you all kinds of interesting things. Only last week I was with the Whites in Samara, where I turned the head of an old general."

Instantly I was on the alert.

"But why do you think that would interest me?" I replied smilingly to the seductive lady, trying to appear quite innocent.

She bent towards me and brought her lips close to my ear. "I know who you are! Yesterday I saw you in the Marosseika with a very pretty young girl. I know, too, that you are here with the knowledge of a certain Cheka official. So you see you may trust me. Won't you come with me?"

Hearing these words in such surroundings gave me a queer sensation.

"I really can't come to-night; I am much too tired," I replied. "But I'll come to-morrow evening if that suits you—about eight o'clock, if that will do. In any case, it will be my last evening in Moscow."

At this she laughed so loudly that people at neighbouring tables stared at us. "What is it?" I asked, in astonishment. "Nothing, nothing!" she nodded smilingly, and then told me where I was to go on the following evening.

"It is really a little outside the city on the way to

Klin, a rather lonely road. There are two country houses on the right-hand side of the road. The other side is not built upon, and the fields are covered with dense undergrowth. I live in the second house."

It was already two o'clock in the morning when I reached my apartment, Petrovski opening the door at my knock.

"You go to bed now, my dear Petrovski," I said. "Why are you still awake?"

"I'll tell you that quite frankly," he answered. "I don't trust all this quietness; I have a feeling that you are being followed by someone or other. This evening two suspicious characters were walking up and down in front of the house for hours. I should be jolly glad if you were back in Reval, safe and sound."

"Oh! go away. You are seeing ghosts!"

I grasped the brave Petrovski by the hand and pushed him into his room. He had stuck to me like a brother, and would have gone through fire for me if I had asked him to. Then, as the room was thick with smoke, I opened the window. Yes—it was quite true! On the far side of the street stood two men whose appearance I did not like. They were engaged in brisk conversation. So perhaps Petrovski had not been seeing ghosts after all. I closed the window. A sharp report caused me to spring aside. One of the men had fired at me. The bullet glanced off the wall and a shower of mortar fell to the ground.

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I extinguished the light and went into my bedroom. On the table lay a note from the little princess. I read :

“ Dear Captain.—I have waited till twelve o’clock, but am now so tired that I must sleep. I hope nothing has happened to you ; I am so worried about you. I am very grateful to you for sheltering a poor refugee like me. What is to become of me when you go away to-morrow ? Dear, good Captain, please take me with you ! A friend of my murdered Father lives in Riga and would certainly take me in. Your deeply grateful M.P.”

Petrovski had already left the house to tell Commissary Antonoff about the shot aimed at me out of the dark. I sat in the drawing-room and let my thoughts dwell upon everything : the previous night at the club, the Cheka agent who had been a ballet dancer, and the man who had fired at me. . . .

I was convinced that he was a spy, probably working for the Entente. But the pretty Cheka agent ? What did she want with me ? Under no circumstances could *she* be an Entente agent. Or was she playing a double game ? “ No, no,” I cogitated ; “ in that case she would have been exposed long ago and shot.”

Then the little princess knocked at the door. She was rejoiced to see me safe and came up to me, pressing my hand hard. “ I have read your letter, your Highness,” I told her ; whereupon she blushed like a small child.

“ Do not desert me ! ” she stammered.

"No, of course I will do as you wish and take you with me."

At this she fell on my neck and wept for joy. She, the once pampered little princess, set the breakfast table like a young housewife, and then glanced sideways at me every now and then to see whether I had everything I wanted.

We sat together for two hours waiting for Petrovski to return. I told her about the woman Cheka agent who had invited me to visit her that evening, and described how I was to get to her house.

The princess began to cry. "But, your Highness," I said soothingly; "I may perhaps gain important information, and with my proverbial luck nothing will happen to me. So not a word more about it!"

At eleven o'clock Petrovski returned with the news that Commissary Antonoff had detailed two agents to look after my safety. At seven o'clock that evening I left the house.

"Dear Captain, do let me come with you," pleaded the little princess. "I can wait near the house."

"No," I replied; "that wouldn't do at all. You must stay at home. Petrovski is here to protect you. I shall be back in three hours, and then to-morrow we'll start for Reval." With these words I quickly left her.

A cold wind whistled through the deserted streets; the first flakes of snow were dancing in the breeze. I had a long way to go, but far and wide not a cab

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was to be seen. A lantern burned dimly at the corner of the road where I had to turn. The first country villa was obviously untenanted. In the second one the shutters were closed, but not fastened, and a light was visible. Peering through the crevice I saw the pretty Cheka spy, wearing a dazzling evening frock, laying the supper table. I knocked at the door. It was opened by the woman herself, who led me inside and into a room furnished in the most luxurious fashion. Before a heavy silk portière stood a sofa against a round table. In one heavy silver wine cooler stood a bottle of genuine vodka, in another a bottle of champagne. On a small side table was a gramophone.

"Please be seated, Herr Oberleutnant Bauermeister," she said in broken German.

"You hinted yesterday that you knew who I was," I answered. "Where did you learn that?"

But she only laughed and pressed me down on the sofa. My suspicion increased, and I determined to keep very much on the alert. The dishes set before me were delicious; the vodka and the wine were perfect.

"May I for once talk business with you?" she suddenly began.

"Business?" I enquired in surprise.

"Well, this is the matter: You have done great injury to the cause of the Entente, as no one knows better than yourself. They have completely lost the vast sums of money and the property they once possessed in Russia. Now you are an Intelligence

Officer of the German High Command, and as such are naturally well-informed as to Germany's general military situation. I am now authorised to hand you ten thousand dollars in return for a detailed report on this subject, and also to enlist you in our service at a fixed monthly salary. What do you say to that ? ”

“ What do I say ? That I should regard it as—let us say—a great insult on your part if you really believed that I could consider such an offer for a moment.”

“ Is that your last word ? If so, you may regret it very much. May I remind you of the Myasoydov affair ? The death sentence against you still remains in force. Is it to be put into effect ? ”

“ In the first place, Colonel Myasoydov was never an agent of mine, and, secondly, the Soviet Government has no intention of executing this sentence on me,” I answered calmly.

“ But supposing I tell you that if you refuse you will never leave this room alive, Herr Oberleutnant ? That all the necessary measures to that end have been taken ? ”

“ I thought you were an agent of the Cheka and not of the Entente,” I retorted. “ You are running a great risk ; do you realise that ? ”

Before I could draw my revolver a cord was thrown round my neck from behind, by someone concealed between the folds of the heavy curtain. I lost consciousness, and heard as if from far off several shots in rapid succession.

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When I opened my eyes again I was lying on a sofa. The little princess knelt at my side with tears in her eyes. Behind her stood the trusty Petrovski and Commissary Antonoff. Only slowly did I recover myself.

"What is it?" I asked feebly. The princess laid her head on my breast and sobbed.

"Shortly after you had left I came to call on you," Commissary Antonoff replied. "The young princess told me briefly where you had gone, and begged me on her knees to follow you. I would have done so in any case, because this woman Selenina has been under suspicion for some time as an agent of the Entente. The shutters were not tightly closed, and through the gap I saw a man, who had been standing behind the curtain, cast a rope round your neck and draw it tight. At that moment I fired through the window and shattered the woman's left hand. Yes, Lieutenant; it was the little princess who saved your life!"

I sat up and looked about me. On the tablecloth was a large pool of blood. On the sofa, bound with ropes, sat the pretty dancer and the man who had tried to strangle me. I stood upright, but was so weak that the little princess had to support me.

"The instinct of self-preservation compels me to remove these two people from the world," the Commissary continued. "I have to think of my family. Please go into the garden for a moment with the princess. I'll soon follow you."

As we stood at the garden gate we heard firing,

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and counted six shots. Then Commissary Antonoff came out of the house.

"They have been executed," was all he said.

At these words the princess collapsed. Two cabs which Antonoff had brought stood at the corner of the road. "You drive on with the princess," he requested. "I will follow."

"You have saved my life, your Highness," I told her when we were in the cab, and pressed her hand. "Why did you do it?"

"Why?" she whispered. "Because you also saved me in my hour of greatest need!" All that night we sat in the drawing-room, talking about our lives till the dawn came.

In the morning Commissary Antonoff and Staff Captain N. came to say farewell. My mission was at an end: I had a complete picture of the military situation in Russia.

That evening I left for Reval, accompanied by the young princess and Petrovski. . . .

* * * * *

We arrived in Reval on November 6, 1918. The final act of the tragedy was developing.

The German fleet mutinied at Kiel. Soldiers' councils were formed on the Russian model. The Kaiser abdicated. A so-called "Council of People's Representatives" was organised, with Ebert at its head. As I could not serve these gentlemen, who in my opinion were responsible for the downfall of Germany, I tendered my resignation. But in

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obedience to an order from the Field-Marshal I remained at my post.

In reply to my proffered resignation my chief wired me from G.H.Q.: "Field-Marshal von Hindenburg, certainly with no light heart, is remaining at the head of the troops, in order to avert an unspeakable catastrophe from Germany and to see that the troops are brought home. He begs all officers to follow his example."

At the time this attitude came in for some criticism. To-day, however, no one can doubt that the Field-Marshal's decision saved Germany from absolute collapse in the Russian style.

We who had the honour of belonging to his staff think with profound veneration and gratitude of that great man to whom, after years of service, in the gloomiest times and at the most responsible post of all, it was vouchsafed to preside at the national rebirth of Germany on January 30 (1933).



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